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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOL. XX, 1950-1

No. 1, OCTOBER, 1950

"Of Man's First Disobedience": Rousseau and Modern Pessimism — H. STEINHAUER — 1
The Meaning of *The Winter's Tale* — F. DAVID HOENIGER — 11
The Mail from Tunis — KENNETH MACLEAN — 27
Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks:* The World of the Father — HENRY C. HATFIELD — 33
Willa Cather's Novels of the Frontier: The Symbolic Function of "Machine-made Materialism" — EDWARD A. BLOOM AND LILLIAN D. BLOOM — 45
Three Mayan Classics — T. B. IRVING — 61
British Trade Unionism in the Mid-Victorian Era — IRVING GARBATI — 69

REVIEWS

The Letters of Poe — KENNETH MACLEAN — 85
European Ideologies — KARL F. HELLEINER — 89
In Tardy Recognition: A History of English Art — G. S. VICKERS — 96
Shorter Notices — 100

No. 2, JANUARY, 1951

One Hundred Years of Canadian Philosophy — JOHN A. IRVING — 107
The Character of Philosophy in Canada — CHARLES W. HENDEL — 124
The Framework of *The Canterbury Tales* — W. H. CLAWSON — 137
The Meanings of the White Whale — R. E. WATTERS — 155
Joseph Furphy, Australian — BRUCE SUTHERLAND — 169
Paradise Lost: The Double Standard — MILTON MILLER — 183
The Future of the Family Farm — DAVID L. MACFARLANE — 200

REVIEWS

Coleridge's Philosophical Lectures — M. H. ABRAMS — 206
Cervantes in English — M. A. BUCHANAN — 209
Cavalcanti's *Canzone d'Amore* — ERNEST H. WILKINS — 211
Stalin: A Political Biography — LEONID I. STRAKHOVSKY — 212

607007

No. 3, April, 1951

"The Mind's Internal Heaven" in Poetry — William O. Raymond 215
The Central Theme of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* — Ernest Schanzer 233
Peter Stolypin: Progressive Statesman — Leonid I. Strakhovsky 239
A New Poem on an Old Subject from a Notebook of A. E. Housman — Tom Burns Haber 254

LETTERS IN CANADA: 1950 — Edited by J. R. MacGillivray
Part I: English-Canadian Letters
Poetry — Northrop Frye 257
Fiction — Claude T. Bissell 262
Drama — Vincent Tovell 272
Social Studies — A. Brady 279
Biographical, Critical, and Miscellaneous Writings — The Editor and Others 292

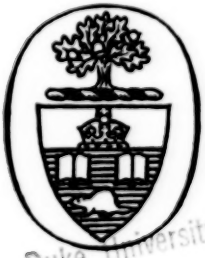
No. 4, July, 1951

Mary Henrietta Kingsley, 1862-1900 — Albert Colby Cooke 329
The Character and Performance of Chaucer's Franklin — R. M. Lumiansky 344
The Past Speaks for Germany — G. W. Field 357
Symbolism in Tennyson's Minor Poems — Elizabeth Hillman Waterston 369
Jane Austen's Art of Rudeness — Edd Winfield Parks 381

LETTERS IN CANADA: 1950 — Edited by J. R. MacGillivray
Part II
French-Canadian Letters — W. E. Collin 388
New-Canadian Letters — Watson Kirkconnell 423

Reviews
Milton and the Diodatis — A. E. Barker 430
The Crisis in the University — R. S. K. Seeley 432
The Making and the Meaning of *Moby-Dick* — Gordon Roper 434
Shorter Notices 436

UNIVERSITY OF
Toronto Quarterly



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Rousseau and Modern Pessimism — H. Steinhauer
The Meaning of *The Winter's Tale* — F. David Hoeniger
The Mail from Tunis — Kenneth MacLean
Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks:* The World of the Father — Henry C. Hatfield
Willa Cather's Novels of the Frontier — E. A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom
Three Mayan Classics — T. B. Irving
British Trade Unionism in the Mid-Victorian Era — Irving Garbati

REVIEWS

The Letters of Poe — Kenneth MacLean
European Ideologies — Karl F. Helleiner
In Tardy Recognition: A History of English Art — G. S. Vickers

Shorter Notices by H. Boeschenstein, Richard M. Saunders, M. M. Kirkwood, T. F. McIlwraith

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CONTENTS

VOL. XX OCTOBER, 1950 No. 1

"Of Man's First Disobedience": Rousseau and Modern Pessimism — H. STEINHAUER — 1

The Meaning of *The Winter's Tale* — F. DAVID HOENIGER — 11

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Shorter Notices — 100

607007

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"OF MAN'S FIRST DISOBEDIENCE": ROUSSEAU AND MODERN PESSIMISM

H. STEINHAUER

THE year 1949 belonged to Goethe as the bi-centenary of his birth. It brought back to our minds the humanist way of life and gave the orators and eulogists an opportunity to indulge in wistful dreams of a golden age that lies far behind us.

The year 1950, a bi-centenary of another sort, belongs to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Two hundred years ago Rousseau published his first, epoch-making essay on the corrupting influence of the arts and sciences. We should therefore be celebrating, this year, the bi-centenary of what the Germans call *Kulturpessimismus*. And it must be admitted that rarely have men been so ready to enter into the spirit of such a celebration as in this "sour year" 1950. The peculiar brand of irrational pessimism which is raging like a swollen river, fed by political and social anxieties and existentialist philosophy, can be traced back through the nineteenth century to the tiny mountain spring which is Rousseau's essay. The *First Discourse* (*Discours sur les sciences et les arts*), a pamphlet of some thirty pages, is without doubt one of the documents that have changed our world.

I

Rousseau himself has told the story of his beginnings as a literary man. During the summer of 1749 he was in the habit of paying a daily visit to his friend Diderot, who was imprisoned at the château of Vincennes, five miles from Paris. As he could not afford to hire a carriage, he walked the distance and back every day. He would start in the early afternoon and read a book as he tramped the road. On one such walk he was looking through a copy of the *Mercure de France* when his eye was caught by the announcement that the Academy of Dijon was offering a prize for the best essay on the theme: "Whether the Progress of the Sciences and Arts Has Contributed to Corrupt or to Purify Manners."

Rousseau was electrified. "The moment I read this," he writes in the *Confessions*, "I saw another universe, and I became another man." He sat down by the wayside and scribbled out a brief essay which lamented the fact that Rome, in her days of luxury and splendour, had forgotten her ancient virtue and austerity. When he arrived at

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO QUARTERLY, vol. XX, no. 1, Oct., 1950

Vincennes, in a state of feverish excitement, he read the short paper to Diderot who encouraged him to develop the idea and to submit the essay for the prize. Rousseau did so; he won the prize and became famous.

Traditional opinion, following Rousseau's own lead, has seen in this maiden effort but a faint adumbration of what was to come from his pen. It seems to me, on the contrary, that even this early work already shows the mature Rousseau, the master dialectician and cunning Machiavellian, that uncanny mixture of noble idealism and practical, even grossly utilitarian, spirit which we find in all his later writings.

Consider the task which Rousseau set for himself. He is to convince a body of academicians—scholars, scientists, artists—that the sciences and arts which they cultivate are born and bred in corruption. He knows that he is a nobody; yet this nobody expects the learned men to listen quietly as he pronounces them to be corrupters of morals and promoters of decadence. What is more, he expects them to award him a prize for this performance. And he does his job so well, that he does get the prize!

Rousseau's technique in handling this situation is masterly. It reveals a mixture of humility and arrogance, the two basic qualities of his personal psychology. Thus, in the very first paragraph he presents his credentials, so to speak, by describing himself as an upright man who knows nothing, but who thinks no less of himself for that. Having both humbled and exalted himself, he now proceeds to do the same for the jury of academicians. While admitting the paradoxical nature of his mission, he slyly relies on the honesty of his judges to do him justice. A just sovereign, he argues, has never hesitated to condemn himself when the evidence was against him. And a man need never be afraid to face an upright and enlightened opponent, even when he is the judge in his own case. Then, having disarmed his judges, he fires a shot designed to pierce the heart of a possible enemy: even if his defence of the truth does not receive the Academy's award, there is one prize it cannot fail to receive—"I shall find that in the bottom of my heart." This is the first public appeal to that famous heart.

Toward the end of the essay he again uses the same disarming tactics. Having delivered a withering attack on the over-emphasis of intellect at the expense of morals, he feels that it is time to soothe the ruffled feelings of the judges. He therefore tells them that the glory which will be his if he wins the prize cannot compare with that which will descend upon the academicians for having offered it. He further

softens the blow by pointing out that the evil which science has brought upon the world has been checked by scientists themselves, through their academies, which watch over the maintenance of high standards of integrity among their members. This, of course, blunts the sharp edge of the main argument, but it succeeds in sweetening the bitter taste that the core of the essay may have left in the learned mouths.

II

From the dense thicket of facts or pseudo-facts that crowd the little tract, one may perhaps single out the following as basic to the main argument. Culture (to use a convenient term which includes both the sciences and the arts) is immoral in its origin as well as in it aim. In origin: astronomy is born out of superstition; eloquence has its source in ambition, hatred, flattery, and lying; geometry in avarice; jurisprudence in human injustice; history in tyranny, war, and conspiracy; even ethics arises from human pride. In aim: culture seeks to rationalize and make acceptable the slavery into which society—that is, organized communal life—has thrown us. Culture is thus a huge propaganda machine for the state. It weans man away from his original state of freedom and simple honesty, and gives him in return nothing but a veneer of politeness, courtesy, and affectation. But beneath the court uniform lurk suspicion, umbrage, fear, hatred, and treachery. It is true that civilized society frowns on crude religious profanation, but it enjoys witty blasphemy. It does not allow us to praise ourselves, but has no objection to our slandering our neighbour. We have developed a strong feeling of patriotism, but we hate other nations more intensely than we ever did before.

Thus all culture is shown to be a veneer of beauty that covers decay and corruption. And this misfortune is not peculiar to our age alone; it has always been so. The souls of men have become corrupt in proportion to the advance of civilization. The two phenomena are tied together as the ebb and flow of the tides. The proof for this sweeping assertion is offered by the contrast between the decadent civilizations of Egypt, Greece, Rome, Constantinople, and China, and the healthy moral tone of life in Sparta, Persia, Scythia, among the Teutonic tribes and in early Rome.

The component parts of our civilized life are in turn subjected to a brief but severe drubbing.

He bids us consider religion. Early man, innocent and virtuous, was not afraid to shelter his gods in his hut and let them be witnesses

of his daily conduct. When he became sophisticated and wicked, he banished these inconvenient spectators into magnificent temples. Later he even vied with the gods in building sumptuous palaces for himself. This *hubris* sharpened his appetite for vice; never was depravity carried to such extremes as under the roofs of the palatial residences of the rich. And what of philosophy? What are philosophers, he asks, but a pack of charlatans, each of whom offers a nostrum of his own for the ills of mankind, each panacea flatly contradicting its rivals? As for statecraft, the principal goal of modern life is to get rich. So, while ancient statesmen talked only of virtue and morals, the modern politician is concerned only with money and trade. Today men are valued like cattle, for what they can fetch on the market. A man's worth to the state is in direct ratio to what he consumes. Hence the idle Sybarite is worth thirty frugal Lacedaemonians.

Rousseau's indictment of education already foreshadows the programme set forth in *Emile,* although here he contents himself with a negative criticism. His point of view is that of our contemporary teachers' colleges: it is a waste of public money to teach children anything that will not be useful to them in later life. Hence he condemns the "dead" classical languages, the writing of verse, and the study of empty rhetoric.

Most scathing of all is the attack on men of letters. Rousseau regards the artist as a destructive critic, out of sympathy with the true needs of humanity, intoxicated with his command over words, animated by a contemptible desire to shine, abusing his gift of language to create unsettling paradoxes, which sap the foundations of belief and destroy virtue. This irrepressible desire on the part of the artist to show off his cleverness drives the masses into the arms of atheism. Moreover, the need for applause at all costs moves the artist to pander to public taste. He lowers his artistic and ethical standards and writes for the day rather than for eternity. And Rousseau specifically cites Voltaire as an example. The truly great man, on the other hand, who is firm and noble enough to defy the low tastes of his contemporaries, is doomed to poverty and oblivion. Our modern cult of art for art's sake has been most deleterious to the practice of virtue. We no longer ask whether a writer is virtuous or not; we want to know whether he has talent. Of a book we ask, not, Is it useful? but, Is it well written?

The principal instrument for the dissemination of the corrupting influence of literature is the printing press. The impious writings of the ancients perished with their authors; the press has given im-

mortality to our own impieties. In a footnote Rousseau suggests that the burning of the famous library at Alexandria, a standard subject of lamentation, was in reality a fortunate event. The press has made possible the popularization of knowledge, which means for Rousseau the corruption of morals on a large scale. The press has admitted into the temple of the sciences and arts a mob of mediocrities who might have become excellent artisans, but are doomed to spend their lives as inferior geometers or bad versifiers. Genius, he says, needs no schools. A Cicero, a Bacon, a Descartes, or a Newton will of their own strength raise monuments to the glory of the human mind. As for the rest of us, it were far better to remain in the bliss of ignorance and obscurity, doing good to our fellow men and leaving to the few great the task of educating humanity.

Rousseau ends with a peroration: "O Virtue, sublime science of simple souls, must one possess an elaborate machinery to know you? Are not your principles engraved in all our hearts? And is it not enough, if one would learn your laws, to turn inward and listen to the voice of one's conscience amidst the silence of one's passion? That is true philosophy; let us learn to be satisfied with it. And rather than envy the glory of those famous men who achieve immortality in the republic of letters, let us establish between us and them that glorious distinction which characterized two great peoples of antiquity: the one talked well, the other acted well."

III

The fundamental attitude underlying the pamphlet is that Calvinist puritanism in which Rousseau was brought up and which periodically took possession of his naturally libertine soul. It has been pointed out how often the word "virtue" recurs in the essay, and virtue for Rousseau generally means renunciation of the luxuries of life, the ideal we associate with early Roman life, and even more with primitive Christianity and its modern manifestation in Calvinism. Hostility to luxury breathes from every sentence of the tract. This is important, because it shows Rousseau challenging the fashion in thought prevalent among the most advanced circles of the day. For the problem of luxury had been a topic of lively discussion since the publication of Bernard de Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* in 1714. The "progressive" intellectuals were on the side of luxury. In attacking it, Rousseau was therefore aiming at the vital spot in the enemy's armour. And when he included the arts and sciences in his onslaught, on the ground that they were born of luxury, the rout of the enemy would be complete.

As in the case of Plato and Tolstoy, then, we have the paradoxical situation of a great artist using his art to condemn art—a phenomenon that was to grow in popularity in the later nineteenth century. The incongruity of the position has often been noted: here is a keen intelligence proving by the use of intelligence that intelligence is corrupt. Does this not nullify the criticism itself as the product of depravity? But such argumentation is mere verbal quibbling. Rousseau himself disposed of this objection in the various defences he wrote to those who challenged his main thesis. His indictment of culture, he points out, is a relative one. He is really saying that the exclusive, or even excessive, development of the intellectual faculties at the expense of the emotional life leads to decadence. What he advocates is the return to a new appreciation of the irrational forces in life, which the Age of Reason had suppressed as being "marks of the beast." But he was well aware, despite Voltaire's taunt, that man could not go down on all fours again. Like every salesman, he tended to over-advertise his product and make extravagant claims for it. But when we have made the usual discount for enthusiasm, there is still a solid core of truth left. And the over-statement served the purpose of calling our attention to the subject in the first place.

To find a concrete embodiment of the healthy life, Rousseau had recourse to the myth of the natural man or noble savage. Scholars have disputed among themselves whether Rousseau was ever a believer in the noble savage and the idyllic state of nature. There are many obscurities and contradictions in his basic definitions, and these have proved fertile soil for multiplying distinctions. A careful analysis of texts does show that Rousseau was never more than a very lukewarm admirer of primitive peoples. But to the casual reader (and until recently all reading of this *First Discourse* was casual), the contrast between primitive innocence and civilized corruption must have stood out clearly enough from the text of the essay. That is the lesson which the age was ready, even eager, to learn.

For the question arises: how did it happen that the Academy of Dijon proposed such a subject at all? Is it natural for a body of learned men to undermine its own position by propounding a question in such a way that it virtually invites a humiliating answer? The fact of the matter is, of course, that the noble savage was anything but a novel notion to Rousseau's contemporaries. From the Renaissance on, the idea of "primitivism" or *Kulturpessimismus* had become acclimatized in European thought. Erasmus writes in his *Praise of Folly* (1512):

School knowledge . . . derives its origin from the author of all abominations. . . . The simple people of the golden age were furnished with no such school knowledge. Nature alone sufficed to guide them; instinct, to prompt them how to live. . . . What would have been the use of the principles of logic to men amongst whom conflicting arguments never arose? . . . What would have been the advantage of jurisprudence to men amongst whom bad morals—the sole apology for good laws—had no existence? As then the professional arts prosper in proportion as they are characterized by folly, so by far the happiest people in the world are those who are in a position to dispense with artificial training altogether, and to follow solely nature as their guide. . . . It is clear to you, I presume, now that those who make wisdom their study, by so doing, make themselves the most miserable of mankind. . . . On the other hand the least miserable of mankind—those who are as little miserable as it is possible for men to be—are those who in condition and intelligence are very little superior to mere brutes, who are content with their lowly lot, and have no ambition for anything beyond it.[1]

Montaigne writes in similar vein in two of his essays. Of the "cannibals" he says:

They are even savage, as we call those fruits wild, which nature of herself and of her ordinary progress has produced; whereas indeed they are those which ourselves have altered by our artificial devices, and diverted from their common order we should term savage. In those are the true and most profitable virtues and natural properties most lively and vigorous, which in these we have bastardized, applying them to the pleasure of our corrupted taste. And if notwithstanding, in divers fruits of those countries that were never tilled, we shall find that in respect of ours they are most excellent, and as delicate unto our taste, there is no reason art should gain the point of honour of our great and puissant mother nature. We have so much by our inventions surcharged the beauties and riches of her works, that we have altogether overchoked her; yet wherever her purity shineth, she makes our vain and frivolous enterprises wonderfully ashamed.[2]

In the essay "On Coaches" he is even more outspoken.

Our world hath of late discovered another . . . no less large, fully peopled, all things yielding, and mighty in strength than ours, nevertheless so new and infantine, that he is yet to learn his ABC. It is not yet full fifty years that he knew neither letters, nor weight, nor measures, nor apparel, nor corn, nor vines. But was all naked, simply pure, in Nature's lap, and lived but with such means and food as his mother nurse afforded him. . . . I fear that by our contagion we shall directly have furthered his declination, and hastened his ruin; and that we shall too dearly have sold him our opinions, our new fangles and our arts. It was an unpolluted, harmless, infant world; yet have we not whipped and submitted the same unto our discipline, or schooled him

[1]Quoted in Hoxie N. Fairchild, *The Noble Savage* (New York, 1928), 18.
[2]*Essays,* Florio's translation, Bk. I, chap. xxx.

by the advantage of our valour and natural forces, nor have we instructed him by our justice and integrity; nor subdued by our magnanimity. Most of their answers, and a number of the negotiations we have had with them, witness that they were nothing short of us, nor beholding to us for any excellency of natural wit or perspicuity, concerning pertinency. . . . But concerning unfeined devotion, awful observance of laws, unspotted integrity, bounteous liberality, due loyalty and free liberty, it hath greatly availed us that we had not so much as they; by which advantage they have lost, cast away, sold, undone and betrayed themselves.[3]

Samuel Richardson the novelist, from whom Rousseau learned much, had repeatedly propounded the thesis that stupidity and virtue, intelligence and vice are allied. In fact, was there ever a time when man, in his dissatisfaction with the present, did not look back wistfully into a hazy past when things were better and men more innocent? The Hebrew myth of the fall of man, as told in Genesis, contains all the ingredients of Rousseau's paradox. Adam and Eve live in a state of primitive innocence until they are tempted by the serpent to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge, which will reveal to them the difference between good and evil. The serpent is cunning—a wily, corrupt intellectual, a tainted professor; and he destroys his innocent victims by enlightening them. The writer in Genesis feels much as Rousseau did about the whole matter; he is a *Kulturpessimist*.

Again, consider the Greek myth of Narcissus. The blind seer Tiresias is asked by the nymph Liriope whether her son Narcissus will attain a ripe age. He replies: he will live long only if he remains unconscious of his selfhood. But, as we know, Narcissus sees his own face in the surface of the water and loses his pristine happiness; he has been corrupted by the birth of self-consciousness. The myth of Prometheus restates the same theme in another form. For what was Prometheus' crime against the gods? that he sought to bring the rudiments of culture to his fellow men. Indeed, the literature of the Greeks and Romans abounds in dreams of a golden age in the remote past, when innocence and simplicity were everywhere. And invariably the cause of decay is given as the growth of civilization or intellect.

Rousseau's thesis, then, was anything but novel. In the world of ideas, however, there is no patent office. Not the man who originates an idea is acclaimed, but the man who manages to give the idea currency. For one reason or another Rousseau's attack on culture electrified the intellectual world of his day as no one before him had succeeded in doing. Not all the intellectuals were convinced, of course.

[3] *Ibid.*, Bk. III, chap. vi.

Voltaire attacked Rousseau's paradox as a slander on mankind. But the thinking public in general was impressed. No matter how many modifications Rousseau subsequently made in his original thesis, his name and prestige henceforth clung to the doctrine of *Kulturpessimismus*. Though the *Second Discourse* (*Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*) shows clearly that Rousseau is not enamoured of the pure state of nature, and does not grow sentimental over the noble savage, yet the doctrine remained his. In *The Social Contract* he repudiates the myth of primitivism outright and sees the golden age in the future, based on a proper organization of society according to the social contract. No matter; the myth stuck to him.

And what a history it has had! One is tempted to say that, wherever the word "Romantic" appears, there lurks the spectre of *Kulturpessimismus*. From Goethe's *Werther* to the novels of D. H. Lawrence, the cult of primitive irrational innocence is carried on. A weird host of recruits has enrolled under the banner of Jean-Jacques' paradox. There one sees the noble proletarian of the Marxists and the noble Aryan of the Nazis marching side by side, despite their radical difference in outlook on life. Freud's central thesis in *Civilization and Its Discontents* is but a restatement of the primitivist credo; so is the underlying thesis of Spengler's *Decline of the West*. The one theme that has pursued Thomas Mann through all his novels, stories, and philosophical essays is this very problem of the relation between intellect and instinct, or (as he calls them) nature and spirit.

It is Rousseau's merit to have revealed with special clarity the problematical nature of intellect, and to have suggested that the religion of progress and perfectibility, so dear to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is a heresy. But it is clear that both Rousseau himself and those who have worked with his paradox have been reactionaries. Voltaire was right, from his "enlightened" point of view, in damning Rousseau as a renegade. For Rousseau's position in the *First Discourse* is that of an old Tory, who is "agin" all the newfangled notions of the hair-brained intellectuals. He calls for a return to the simple crude honesty of the common man, is opposed to the education of the masses, disapproves of the vulgarization of knowledge.

In labelling Rousseau a "reactionary" I do not wish to "smear" him. I repeat: his warning that the unfettered development of intellect is pernicious was a meritorious act at the time it was uttered. Rousseau's immediate influence was therefore salutary. But it cannot be denied that his many followers in the last two centuries have all

too frequently formed the phalanx of anti-humanism, whether of the right or of the left.

It is against this anti-humanism that Goethe's figure rises as a symbolic challenge. It was Nietzsche who singled out Rousseau and Goethe as the prototypes of two educational models for modern man. The contrast between the positions represented by Rousseau's *First Discourse* and by Goethe's mature humanism is indeed extreme. Goethe stood for the complete self-realization of man through a harmonious development of all the faculties. While not a rationalist in the narrow eighteenth-century sense of the term, Goethe believed that the good life could be achieved only by a proper ordering of the impulses, with the reason somewhere near the top and the aggressive instincts at the bottom. Underlying his conception of man's destiny was an optimism (though not a sentimental one) which believed that a gradual improvement in man's estate could take place. Goethe felt that, while man could never attain such a pinnacle of perfection that he might dispense with what the theologians call divine grace, yet he could achieve a large measure of salvation by his own efforts.

In contrast to this "enlightened" programme, the Rousseau of 1750 champions the bliss of ignorance, thumps the tub of the old-fashioned, repressive Calvinist virtues, with a liberal mixture of crude utilitarianism.

1749 or 1750? Between these two dates there is an abyss which cannot be bridged. We must choose.

THE MEANING OF *THE WINTER'S TALE*

F. David Hoeniger

It is required
You do awake your faith.
That she is living,
Were it but told you, should be hooted at
Like an old tale; but it appears she lives. . . .

THE Winter's Tale has been curiously neglected in Shakespearean criticism. Scholarly articles on this play are scarce, and in general works on Shakespeare it is seldom given serious treatment. The only major studies on *The Winter's Tale* in recent years are those by Wilson Knight and S. L. Bethell,[1] and these have, in my opinion, not solved the essential problem, though Mr. Knight has thrown some significant light on it. The purpose of the present article is to stimulate greater interest in the play by attempting a revaluation based on a new and revolutionary interpretation of its meaning. But it is especially at variance with the still prevailing view first formulated by Lytton Strachey: that towards the end of his life Shakespeare was getting weary and satisfied himself with writing idyllic but unprofound poetic drama. H. B. Charlton calls the romances "the products of an old man," and even E. K. Chambers and Dover Wilson have encouraged a similar attitude. Yet is it at all convincing that a man of the creative energy of Shakespeare should, when he had only reached his late forties, develop signs of senility and soothe himself "after the tempest of *Timon* and *King Lear* with the fairy-tales of youth"? In this paper, first the general thesis will be put forth that only if we approach *The Winter's Tale* as an allegory can we do justice to its greatness. Then will follow an outline of what I understand to be its meaning and significance.

I

The most serious criticism levelled against the allegorical interpretation of Shakespearean drama is that it too often tends to draw the attention away from the humanity reflected in the poetry and surface meaning, from "the gracious and distinguished personality of its author which is the only real thing that can be absorbed by the culture and civilization of his people."[2] This contention must be

[1]G. Wilson Knight, *The Crown of Life* (London and New York, 1947); S. L. Bethell, *The Winter's Tale* (London, 1948), 128.
[2]Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, March 28, 1927.

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faced squarely. The object of good critical analysis is to focus more clearly the core of the work of art under consideration, and if this object is lost sight of in an allegorical interpretation, not the most copious display of erudition on the part of its author can serve as an excuse.

In the case of *The Winter's Tale,* the allegorical approach can be justified, I think, on several grounds. First, it has become more and more apparent that those critics who confine their attention to the surface meaning of Shakespeare's final plays have not done them justice, indeed have tended to belittle their greatness. The literal meaning of *The Winter's Tale* by itself offers no sufficiently satisfactory explanation for the profound impact which this play makes upon the sensitive reader or spectator, an experience which only a great and unified work of art can call forth.

This is not to say, of course, that the surface meaning of *The Winter's Tale* generally creates little enjoyment or has little subtlety. Much of it is stamped with Shakespeare's magnificence. Several of the scenes, especially that of the trial, are beautifully organized and filled with exciting action. The dramatic study of Leontes' jealousy, or rather maniac obsession, is powerful, convincing even if expressionistic, and psychologically profound, especially in the scenes when he is defending repeatedly and ironically his non-tyrannical attitude just after having rejected roughly the counsel of his best friends and advisers. Like Othello, Leontes is fundamentally a good man, but unlike Othello, as Coleridge has pointed out in a brilliant passage, his jealousy, a vice of his own mind, has certain well-defined effects and concomitants.[3] The portrayal of the love feelings is unmatched in beauty as well as in understanding almost anywhere in Shakespeare. Perdita and Florizel are respectively ideal masculine and feminine love personified, and yet they are intensely real, throbbing with life. Florizel's praise of Perdita (IV, iv, 135-46) is one of the most moving passages in the whole of Shakespeare. Furthermore, Autolycus is a very successful character in his light-hearted roguery without the least bit of conscience or, for that matter, ill fortune. He impersonates the kind of evil without which life would be rather dull, though perhaps more uniformly moral and secure. The scene of the oracle as well as the final statue scene contain beautiful verse and project a kind of operatic quality reminding us rather of Mozart's *Magic Flute* than of the ordinary Shakespearean play. Lastly, the

[3]Coleridge, *Essays and Lectures on Shakespeare* (Everyman's Library), 166.

comedy of *The Winter's Tale* depends largely on an intricate kind of irony. This irony forms the undertone of most scenes, accompanying the series of misunderstandings and sudden inconsequential actions to which the characters of the play, part of the world of change, are subject.

Yet however satisfying a great part of the surface meaning, there nevertheless remain many passages and scenes which do not make much sense unless viewed as part of a deeper imaginative world hidden behind the surface. To my mind such passages as the famous discussion on art and nature in Act IV can be integrated into the whole meaning of the play only if we go beyond the literal level of interpretation. The contention that Shakespeare is here merely satirizing an intellectual controversy of his time ignores both the central place the discussion is given in the most important scene of the play and the dramatic development of its argument. Attracting our attention at once by its marked formality, it forms the core of the episode in which Perdita bestows flowers upon her various guests, according to their age. More obviously puzzling are the references to Mamillius in the first scene, and the long passage early in Act I, scene II, when we are told that Leontes and Polixenes in their youth were innocent but "have tripp'd since." And if the literal meaning in parts at least is satisfying, this does not exclude the possible presence of a more profound allegorical meaning underneath. Much earlier in his career, even if in a different manner, Shakespeare had tried to do what the contemporary critic Sir John Harington in *A Brief Apology for Poetry* (1591) claims for the allegorical works of the ancients, which seek "with one kind of meat, and one dish to feed diverse tastes. For the weaker capacities will feed themselves with the pleasantness of the history and sweetness of verse, some that have stronger stomachs will, as it were, take a further taste of the moral sense, a third sort, more highconceited than they, will digest the Allegory." The true allegorical critic, therefore, follows the advice of Dante in the *Convivio* and keeps the surface meaning well in mind, while probing for a still more profound interpretation in its symbolism, which itself heightens the effect of the humanity of the work of art.

The whole tone of the play with its repeated allusion to supernatural forces and its at times unearthly serenity supports me in the belief that *The Winter's Tale* is such an allegory. Here possibly may also be found the explanation for the highly unusual and complex form of the play. Shakespeare rarely hesitates in straining our

credulity, but nowhere else does he offer a like series of improbable circumstances, events, and developments. Here only is the non-observance of the unity of time made melodramatic by the appearance of a chorus announcing a change of sixteen years. Three acts in the prevailing mood of tragic gloom and violence are followed by long scenes of pastoral comedy. On one occasion a bear chases poor Antigonus upon the stage, though he gets hold of him only beyond the eyes of the audience. Close to the opening of the play occurs the most violent and sudden change in character anywhere in Shakespeare. And at the end, a statue suddenly turns into a human person, presumably dead for sixteen years. Such blatant improbabilities may well be a hint that the meaning of the play is symbolic rather than literal.

But my argument receives further support from the general thesis that as Shakespeare matured he became an increasingly symbolic poet and dramatist. Elizabethan poets and critics did not share the Baconian and eighteenth-century view of words as merely established definitions or substitutes for natural objects. And consequently the poet did not consider it his task, as did Pope, to employ words in such a manner as to arouse only familiar, "universal" associations. To Sidney (and in all likelihood to Shakespeare), words are symbols employed by the human mind in the understanding of outward and inward reality, and are essentially inseparable from the mind. Words are regarded as plastic and subjective, their precise meaning depending on the speaker as well as on the listener. It then follows that if the poet desires to convey a profound vision of reality, he will seek to break away from the contemporary stereotyped associations to which words have become chained; he will try to revitalize the symbolic quality of words.

To accomplish this purpose, the employment of original simile or metaphor will be one of his most important tools. The simile, by inviting us to compare, widens the symbolic content of words themselves. Metaphor goes a step further: it does not merely juxtapose two objects or the worlds of which they are part (thereby to some extent "defining" or limiting the meaning), it also effects a degree of identity between them. Professor Reid MacCallum, referring to this point, therefore speaks of poetry as "two-dimensional speech."[4] But, if I have interpreted the terms rightly, Dante and the medieval tradition meant by the second or historical level of allegory more or less the

[4]Reid MacCallum, in "Unpoetry—Poetry—Metapoetry," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, XI, 1942.

interpretation of a work of art as an expanded simile, and by the anagogical level the understanding or appreciation of a work of art as an expanded and unified metaphor. Allegory in its comprehensive sense (including anagogy) therefore is one of the most poetic forms of speech, for in it words are loaded with the greatest possible symbolic suggestion. It is not surprising, then, if a great poet resorts to allegory to express his vision.[5]

Recent studies in Shakespearean imagery have corroborated by careful evidence the fact that as Shakespeare's artistry matured, at least up to the time of *Antony and Cleopatra,* not only did the meaning of his plays become increasingly universal, but also his language became more and more concentrated.[6] Thus in the early *Henry VI* plays, for instance, the imagery is preponderantly ornamental and, as it were, superimposed. It usually performs the mere function of adding colour to a rhetorical speech of state. True to the example of Lyly, complex conceits abound. The imagery seldom expresses profound sentiment. And as all characters more or less employ the same manner of speech, the imagery can hardly ever be said to characterize the speaker. The world of *Henry VI* is thus deficient in dramatic characterization, in unity, in poetic sincerity, and consequently in universality either of meaning or of appeal.

If we look, by way of contrast, at *Antony and Cleopatra,* a play separated in date of composition from *The Winter's Tale* by only about three years, we are immediately struck by an immense development. Imagery now commands the atmosphere and is commanded by it. Ship and sea images supply the dominant landscape. But, most important, the imagery both emphasizes the nature and magnifies the stature of the two leading characters. Throughout the play, it performs a kind of underground activity symbolic of the emotions and fortunes of the two lovers. By stressing the godlike aspect of Antony, who is called "the god of Jupiter," "the greatest prince o' the world, the noblest," "the crown o' the earth," it makes us sense that his decline and end is not just an item of personal history but an event with repercussions upon the whole world. His downfall marks a gradual invasion by darkness of the universe, likewise borne out by

[5]The word "symbol" was not used before about 1600 in its present meaning (see *Oxford Dictionary*). The term is loosely employed, referring sometimes to the second, sometimes to the anagogical level of allegory, sometimes to an entirely different mode of expression. Thus I do not think one can make such sharp distinctions between symbol and allegory as does C. S. Lewis in *The Allegory of Love.*

[6]In what follows I am indebted to W. Clemen, *Shakespeares Bilder, Bonner Studien zur englischen Philologie,* Heft XXVII, 1936.

the imagery. Cleopatra undergoes all the stages of development from a mere dish, and Egyptian harlot who loves catching Antony on a bended fish-hook, to "Royal Egypt," "day of the world" (IV, VIII, 13), even "eastern star" (V, II, 311), and finally "fire and air." It is thus mainly by the consummate use of poetic language, of the symbolic forces of expression, that Shakespeare has imbued *Antony and Cleopatra* with a degree of universality of meaning bordering on that of allegory.

Theoretically speaking, it would then seem to be not merely a possible but a likely development for Shakespeare to attempt in his final plays a still broader universality, to create his own peculiar variation in dramatic form upon the most profound of all themes: man's eternal quest to shake off the weaker parts of his nature and fortune and to attain to ideal spiritual existence and inward freedom, at no matter what cost of struggle, renunciation, and penitence, if only the eternal dream of Utopia—a dream especially intense in Shakespeare's age—might come true.

For its poetic quality, *The Winter's Tale* need not fear comparison with even the greatest of Shakespeare's work. It is full of such beautiful and suggestive passages as these words of Hermione's:

> You may ride 's
> With one soft kiss a thousand furlongs ere
> With spur we heat an acre. (I, II, 94-6)

As sheer poetry taken out of its context, this is a rich image. But its value is enhanced by the fact that it fits the whole theme of the play, indeed contains it in its very words: the opposition of love and tyranny. There is not much in English poetry outside Shakespeare to equal it. And if Shakespeare's last plays are the most poetic ones, are plays in which characters themselves are often poetically conceived, are plays in which the concentration of meaning of many passages reaches the extreme of ellipse, are we to suppose that the poetry is only the surface, that there is no deeper symbolic unity which gives shape to and explains the whole?[7]

Nevertheless, we must not close our eyes to at least one central difficulty. The fact remains that however much we admire *The Winter's Tale,* it has not been highly successful on the stage. Its dramatic quality is uneven; it is full of excitement in parts, but drag-

[7]The contention that unity is lacking because Shakespeare, in order to attract a larger audience, copied the manner of Beaumont and Fletcher is surely unsound. Shakespeare had earlier given ample proof that he excelled his models by far, and that while he catered to the taste of his audience, he did not allow himself to be enslaved by it, to the extent of cheapening his art.

ging in others. In characterization, the play falls far short of the great tragedies and of *Antony and Cleopatra*. The final speeches do not fully satisfy but leave us, even if just a little, puzzled. The only explanation I can offer is that sometime towards the end of the Middle Ages or at the beginning of the Renaissance, the unified sensibility to be seen in works of art where a satisfying surface meaning is perfectly integrated with deeper layers of significance was lost, not to be recovered since. The many attempts since Ibsen in our own age to reintroduce symbolism into the drama have never met with full success. We always feel somehow or other, either that the symbolism is superimposed, or that the story lacks in vitality of surface interest. I suggest that Shakespeare already had to face this problem in *The Winter's Tale,* and partly failed to master it.

Let me now turn to the interpretation proper.

II

The core of the meaning of *The Winter's Tale* is contained in the famous discussion on art and nature in Act IV, which attracts our attention mainly by its formality of tone (IV, iv, 79-103). It occurs early in the scene of the sheep-shearing festival when Perdita, "the mistress o' the feast," presents different flowers to all the guests, befitting their respective ages. The only flowers she does not favour are carnations and gillyflowers "which some call Nature's bastards." Asked by Polixenes the reason for her aversion, she says:

> For I have heard it said
> There is an Art which in their piedness shares
> With great creating Nature.

Polixenes then argues ably that art itself is derived from nature, and fulfils an important function:

> You see, sweet maid, we marry
> A gentler scion to the wildest stock,
> And make conceive a bark of baser kind
> By bud of nobler race. This is an art
> Which does mend Nature, change it rather, but
> The art itself is Nature.

Perdita apparently agrees ("So it is"), but when urged by Polixenes to take the consequence and cultivate gillyflowers, she objects firmly:

> No more than were I painted I would wish
> This youth should say 'twere well, and only therefore
> Desire to breed by me.

This strange discussion raises several questions: what does Polixenes mean by art and nature, and what does Perdita mean? Why does Perdita agree with Polixenes theoretically, and yet not follow his counsel but in fact reassert her initial position? Why does Shakespeare make Polixenes, too, ironically break his counsel of marrying "a gentler scion to the wildest stock," when shortly after he objects to the engagement of his own son to a mere shepherdess? Lastly, is there a relation between Perdita's theory of art and that exhibited later in the supposed statue of Julio Romano? The following discussion will have for its aim the answer to these questions.

The imagery as well as the fable itself suggest four themes, all of which are closely interwoven and here separated only for convenience' sake: first, that of the identity between parents and children—symbolically, Mamillius and Perdita are parts of the changing personality of Leontes; second, that of summer and winter, of the rebirth of nature, the return of flowers and of the sun; third, that of youth, age, death, and resurrection—of man's innocence in childhood, his loss of it through sin, and, after a long period of struggle, sorrow, and repentance during which all selfishness is cleansed from his nature, his attainment of permanent peace with the help of grace; fourth and last, that of art, of inspiration or the creative imagination, its place in our lives, and its relation to nature.

The theme of identity pervades the whole play, and attention to it will solve one of the main difficulties obstructing the path of a symbolical interpretation, that is, the large number of characters. At once, in the opening scenes, the likeness of Mamillius to his father Leontes is emphasized. Leontes comments on it:

> What, hast smutched thy nose?
> They say it is a copy out of mine. . . .
> Thou want'st a rough pash and the shoots that I have,
> To be full like me; yet they say, we are
> Almost as like as eggs. (I, II, 121-30)

Shortly thereafter, Mamillius himself remarks: "I am like you, they say" (I, II, 208). It seems odd, too, that Leontes should address Mamillius, even if playfully, with animal imagery (I, II, 124-7) symbolic of his own state of mind. Similarly the main argument of Paulina's appeal, in the scene when she holds high the little child, is to demonstrate Leontes' own features in its face:

> Behold, my Lords,
> Although the print be little, the whole matter
> And copy of the father, eye, nose, lip,
> The trick o' his frown, his forehead, nay the valley,

> The pretty dimples of his chin and cheek,
> His smiles,
> The very mould and frame of hand, nail, finger.
> **(II, III, 97-103)**

Paulina's main purpose is of course to show that the child cannot be Polixenes' daughter. Nevertheless, the similarity to Leontes is curiously exaggerated, and moreover supported by the remainder of the play.

Likewise, the similarity between Perdita and Hermione is stressed. When on her flight with Florizel from Bohemia, Perdita arrives at the Sicilian court, Leontes, unaware that she is his own daughter, gazes at her beauty with such amazement that Paulina feels herself drawn to utter a warning. Leontes answers:

> I thought of her [Hermione],
> Even in these looks I made. (V, I, 226-7)

The close degree of resemblance, symbolizing a degree of identity, between the children and both Leontes and Hermione forms a significant fact in this play.[8]

However, a strange similarity between Leontes and Polixenes is also hinted at quite clearly when the latter recalls their youth:

> We were as *twinn'd*[9] lambs, that did frisk i' the sun,
> And bleat the one at the other. (I, II, 67-8)

Furthermore, Polixenes, in Act IV, in his attitude to his son Florizel reminds us, even if mildly so, of the tyrannic attitude of Leontes towards his child Perdita. Florizel has to flee from his father's wrath, after Perdita has been threatened:

> If ever henceforth thou
> These rural latches to his entrance open,
> Or hoop his body more with thy embraces,
> I will devise a death as cruel for thee
> As thou art tender to it. (IV, IV, 447-51)

In this play, therefore, parents are depicted as on the one side closely resembling, on the other as hostile to their children, the conflict being resolved only in the final scenes when friendship and love are re-established and celebrated.

The theme of winter and summer and of the rebirth of nature is quite obvious on the literal level, but in it there is a spiritual signi-

[8]Florizel, too, is a copy of his father Polixenes, as Leontes remarks:

> Your mother was most true to wedlock, prince;
> For she did print your royal father off,
> Conceiving you. (V, I, 124)

[9]My italics.

ficance as well. It is part of the whole play, not merely of the pastoral scenes. The opening acts take place during winter, and that is why Mamillius starts telling a winter's tale. Clearly this winter's tale is a symbolical description of Leontes himself in an inward state of winter, but the tale itself is only completed when death has given way to life and winter to spring.

Perdita as a baby is a "blossom," and as such Antigonus abandons her in the desert. When she reappears as a maiden, she is the incarnation of spring and early summer, "no shepherdess, but Flora, Peering in April's front." Autolycus has just entertained us with his song of daffodils:

> Why, then comes in the sweet of the year;
> For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale. (IV, III, 3-4)

Soon after we learn of Whitsun pastorals. When therefore Perdita and Florizel return to Sicily, they bring with them the atmosphere of spring and summer, and indeed Florizel is received by Leontes with "Welcome hither, as is the spring in the earth." The resurrection of Hermione is accompanied by the reappearance of flowers and vegetation and the life-giving force of the sun.

If we examine the imagery of the play more closely, we notice a striking number of references to the months of the various seasons, and likewise to the vitalizing energy symbolized by blood (especially IV, IV, 147-9).[10] But of greater importance still is the sun imagery. The god of *The Winter's Tale* is Apollo, the sun god, regarded by Dion in the oracle scene as the source of wisdom (III, I, 18-21). Leontes, however, is in the state of winter, when the sun temporarily disappears, and for this reason does not obey him. But this disobedience to the sun god means nothing short of rejection of creation itself; he is punished by the death of both Mamillius and Hermione, and also casts out his child Perdita. A few of the special passages containing sun imagery should be quoted. Polixenes and Leontes as innocent children like "lambs . . . did frisk i' the sun." Florizel defends his love to a simple maid by using Apollo as precedent:

> . . . and the fire-rob'd god
> Golden Apollo, a poor humble swain,
> As I seem now. (IV, IV, 29-31)

Perdita, after Polixenes' intervention, remarks:

[10]See also IV, IV, 160; V, II, 97-8; etc. In I, II, 93, "blood" of course refers to ambition, passion, and sin generally.

I was not much afeard, for once or twice
I was about to speak, and tell him plainly
The self-same sun that shines upon his court
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
Looks on alike. (IV, iv, 452-6)

And the servant thus describes the returning Perdita to Leontes:

Ay, the most peerless piece of earth, I think,
That e'er the sun shone bright on. (V, i, 94-5)

However, the most relevant passage illustrating the theme of summer and winter is the episode referred to at the beginning of this discussion where Perdita bestows different flowers upon her guests. To Polixenes and Camillo, she first presents rosemary and rue, standing for remembrance and grace, and

these keep
Seeming and savour all the winter long. (IV, iv, 74-5)

Next, she explains to Polixenes why she does not care for flowers of autumn, carnations or clove-pink, or "gillyvors, which some call Nature's bastards." Of that kind, she says,

Our rustic garden's barren; and I care not
To get slips of them.

The reason for this is complex as will be shown later, but part of it is that Perdita personifies spring and early summer and therefore finds it difficult to sympathize with flowers of autumn, that is, the season close to "summer's death, or on the birth of trembling winter." She can, however, cultivate flowers that "keep seeming and savour all the winter long."

The context does not make it quite clear to whom she presents the flowers of middle summer befitting middle age (ll. 104-8), but she reserves the flowers of spring for Florizel. The passage is very beautiful, and as it is likewise important, I shall quote most of it:

Now, my fair'st friend,
I would I had some flowers o' the spring that might
Become your time o' day: and yours, and yours,
That wear upon your virgin branches yet
Your maidenheads growing. O Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall
From Dis's waggon! daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim

> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,
> That die unmarried, ere they can behold
> Bright Phoebus in his strength—a malady
> Most incident to maids. . . . (IV, iv, 112-25)

In Dante's *Divine Comedy,* close to the end of the *Purgatorio,* when he reaches the earthly paradise which represents blessedness in this life—and which consists, as Dante himself states in the *De Monarchia,* of the exercise of man's proper power—he encounters a flower-maiden called Matilda. After describing her activity and graceful movement, Dante continues:

> "Beholding thee and this fair place, methinks,
> I call to mind where wandered and how looked
> Proserpine, in that season, when her child
> The mother lost, and she the bloomy spring." . . .
> her eyes she deigned to raise,
> That shot such splendour on me, as I ween
> Ne'er glanced from Cytherea's. . . .[11]

The parallelism of these two passages, with their reference to both Persephone and Cytherea or Venus in the description of a flower-maiden, is indeed striking, and suggests almost a conscious tradition linking the figure of the lost maiden, common to many popular stories, the Perdita of *The Winter's Tale,* to the pagan myth of Persephone on the one hand, and to Dante's Matilda or Milton's unfallen Eve on the other. For Eve too, in *Paradise Lost,* is herself the fairest among the flowers of the garden (IX, 432).

Let me leave Shakespeare for a moment and examine the myth of Persephone. On the surface it symbolizes the seasonal cyclic changes. By the will of Zeus who desired to please Pluto, the god of the nether world, Persephone was lured beyond the reach of help into a lush meadow of narcissus flowers, where she was snatched by Pluto, ravished, and detained in the underworld. She was however permitted to return to the earth for eight months of the year. Sir James Frazer in his analysis of the myth points out that Persephone is the cornseed, sown during autumn, then hidden in the earth while the fields lie bare and fallow in the winter, to blossom forth with the return of spring. Likewise, Perdita is born during early winter, deposited in the desert as a "blossom," and then flowers forth into the spring of youth of the pastoral scenes. But if Persephone is a personification of the young corn of the present year, her mother Demeter

[11]Dante, *Purgatorio,* Canto XXVIII, H. F. Cary translation.

or Ceres is a personification of the old corn of the last year, which has given birth to the new crop. Demeter is the ripe crop of the year, Persephone the seed crop taken from it. But if this is the case, the Persephone of the one year becomes the Demeter of the next. Therein lies the identity of Demeter and Persephone. By analogy, we can understand the close similarity between Perdita and Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*. This, however, is only part of the story. Ancient commentaries on the Eleusinian mysteries make it clear that these symbolic representations were looked upon not merely as representing the cyclic changes of the seasons, but also as expressing man's hope in a blissful immortality. Man, too, passes through youthful spring, the maturity of summer, the autumn of declining powers, and death, in order after his resurrection—so his faith assures him—to enter the spring of a new life.

As in myth and the folklore derived from it, so in Shakespeare. In *The Winter's Tale*, in fact, the theme of the changing seasons is so closely interwoven with that of youth and age, of death and resurrection, the presence of the one implying the other, that a few references only to the text will suffice to indicate the existence of the latter throughout the work. In the very first scene, Camillo tells Archidamus that the promise of Mamillius is the only excuse why "they that went on crutches ere he was born desire yet their life to see him a man" (I, i, 44-5). When Antigonus relates his wondrous dream, he says:

> I have heard, but not believ'd the spirits o' the dead
> May walk again. If such thing be, thy mother
> Appear'd to me last night, for ne'er was dream
> So like a waking. (III, iii, 16-19)

The Shepherd, after hearing the Clown's story of Antigonus' death, exclaims: "Thou met'st with things dying, I with things newborn" (III, iii, 117). And of course Hermione is redeemed in the last scene by life from the "numbness of death," life in the form of the repentant and loving Leontes, combined with the creative youth and love of Perdita.

We should also note the frequent mention of innocence. As children, Polixenes tells Hermione in the first act,

> what we chang'd
> Was innocence for innocence; we knew not
> The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd
> That any did. Had we pursu'd that life,
> And our weak spirits ne'er been higher rear'd
> With stronger blood, we should have answer'd Heaven

> Boldly "Not guilty"; the imposition clear'd
> Hereditary ours. (I, II, 68-75)

This passage and its context make little sense, if the symbolic meaning of the play is forgotten. When the Shepherd makes his first entrance, he tells us, half in the tone of a country philosopher, though of course immediately prompted by the loss of his sheep: "I would there were no age between ten and three-and-twenty, or that youth would sleep out the rest, for there is nothing in the between but getting wenches with child, wronging the ancientry, stealing, fighting" (III, III, 59-63). Little children are free from sin; yet as we grow up it becomes inevitably part of us, creating theft, misery, jealousy, adultery, death. Finally, however, there is a way of repentance and restoration, a resurrection to harmony and peace. All this is a law of nature: for however much we might wish, we cannot sleep between ten and twenty-three. And it is in accordance with this law that Paulina assures the gaoler that

> This child was prisoner to the womb and is
> By law and process of great nature thence
> Freed and enfranchis'd, not a party to
> The anger of the king, nor guilty of,
> If any be, the trespass of the queen. (II, II, 59-63)

Turning to the fourth and last theme, that of art and inspiration, we are now equipped to answer our initial questions. A partial reply has already been furnished to the question why Perdita does not plant carnations and gillyflowers, flowers of the dying season. But she explains her attitude clearly by means of an emphatic comparison:

> No more than were I painted I would wish
> This youth should say 'twere well, and only therefore
> Desire to breed by me.

Perdita does not follow Polixenes' advice because she will have nothing to do with artificiality. Man can share with great creating nature by faking her, by making a bastard flower almost look like a natural one. But art, she asserts, must be loved. If she were painted not real, she would not want Florizel's courtship. Polixenes, therefore, means by art artificiality, a process that mimics nature, or, as he says, "mends" nature. His is not that truly creative art which grows out of nature as part of its very manifestation.

The real difficulty arises from the fact that both artificiality and real art can be argued to derive originally from nature. That is why Perdita answers Polixenes' discourse with "So it is." She disagrees with him in practice, however, because though she too could defend the intricate relation between art and nature, she means by

art something fundamentally opposed to Polixenes' theory.[12] We should not ignore the speakers in considering their words. Polixenes is a fairly old man, disguised moreover, and about to play the tyrant. He still represents fallen man, and like Leontes, even if his story is much less developed in the play, he has to become reconciled. He thus speaks for purely material human civilization, the Babylon which seeks to compete with the Heavenly Jerusalem. Not so Perdita, who presents the principle of fertility heightened by the robe she wears of which she herself says that "it does change my disposition," reminding us of Cleopatra in her last act, and of the magic mantle of Prospero.

But nature itself comprises the two contradictory processes of creation and destruction. It produces the jealousy of Leontes, and the innocence and love of Perdita, even the paradisial reconciliation of Hermione and Leontes in the end. In the field of art, nature is the source both of decadence and of creation. An actor on the stage can mimic the character he portrays and make a fairly convincing job of it. But he will never satisfy fully unless he becomes completely identified with his role, unless he becomes the person for whom he stands on the stage. Then only will he fulfil himself, and be convincing, real, and creative. Perdita's objection, therefore, is against decadent art, against that aspect of civilization which runs counter to the true creative process of nature, and belongs solely to fallen man. For this kind of art is in the long run clearly self-destructive, and man loses faith in it, just as Polixenes ironically goes against his own counsel.

Perdita's art is not merely harmonious with, but itself develops upon nature's creative process. Julio Romano "would beguile nature of her custom" and "put breath into his work." Perdita's theory of art is completed by Julio Romano's, who proves that through the imagination which comes with love and the rejection of our sins —and he is clearly a symbol for the regenerated Leontes—and not through artifice and pretence and wishing to out-rival or to "mend" that which has given us being, the artist can restore life. While sin kills, the creative imagination redeems the inward life.

The symbolism of this play thus revolves around the life—death—life pattern of nature and of human existence. From the playful innocence of youth, man passes into the state of sin and inward death, just as does the Clown who witnesses the death of Antigonus.

[12]Shakespeare was of course not in the least original in his awareness of the ambiguities involved in the art-nature relation which was a Renaissance commonplace. See H. S. Wilson, "Nature and Art in 'Winter's Tale,'" *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, XVIII, 1943, 114-20. The contention that the function of this passage is confined to that of light satirical play on a contemporary theme, however, is not acceptable to me.

But the restored Old Shepherd "meets with things newborn." Leontes suffers the loss of Mamillius, and the temporary death of Hermione and Perdita, passing through tempest and fall, in order sixteen years later, as a man old with "experience," in Blake's sense of the word, to be restored to life and permanent peace. His repentance is accompanied by the growth of a new and creative love, itself derived from benevolent nature, assuming bodily shape in Perdita. His paradise at the end of the play is not, like Perdita's, that of a garden, but of a city and a temple, corresponding to the Heavenly City in the New Testament, the Temple of God. There he remarries Hermione, just as Dante meets Beatrice again, and Faust the eternal form of Gretchen.

It may be asked at this point whether the interpretation I have suggested may not perhaps hold true also for Shakespeare's source, Greene's *Pandosto, or The Triumph of Time* (1588). It is easily demonstrated that this is not the case. Greene's story is but a second-class tale arbitrarily treating the theme of man's slavery to the wheel of fortune. Many of the basic features of *The Winter's Tale* are of Shakespeare's invention. Besides several characters, he adds Antigonus' dream, the bear, the statue; above all he changes the suicide ending into an all-embracing reconciliation. Of special interest for our purpose, however, is the fact that the theme of artificiality exists already in a crude form in the original. Fawnia, the counterpart of Perdita, tries to convince her princely lover that, however well disguised, an artificial shepherd can never be like a genuine one: ". . . but all that wear cowls are not monks: painted eagles are pictures, not eagles. Zeus's grapes are like grapes, yet shadows. Rich clothing makes not princes: nor homely attire beggars. Shepherds are not called shepherds because they wear hooks and bags, but that they are born poor, and live to keep sheep. . . ." Here, as elsewhere, Shakespeare was alert in seizing hints in his source.

I have tried to suggest a meaning of *The Winter's Tale,* but if my approach is at all justified, we must realize that the very nature of the meaning makes it impossible to confine it to a limited form or to translate it into prosaic logic. Deep artistic meaning cannot be rendered in what is not art, and therefore the allegorical critic finally must either become creative himself or speak in utter mysteries. This paper therefore has merely aimed at suggesting a new direction of approach, involving a revaluation of the play. *The Winter's Tale* is not just a tale of fancy or a charming illustration of a moral platitude, or the utopia of a feeble old man's dream. Its poetry is great and its world is real, however much it has been "hooted at like an old tale."

THE MAIL FROM TUNIS

KENNETH MACLEAN

THE love story in Emily Dickinson's life has been told by Professor George Whicher of Amherst College in his memorable study, *This was a Poet*. After attending Mary Lyon's Seminary in South Hadley, where she distinguished herself partly by a refusal to make a public declaration of her faith, Emily Dickinson returned to her family's home in Amherst where she saw something of a young man who was a student in her father's law offices. It would seem that to Ben Newton she owed much of her intellectual awakening, for he gave her the better books, among them the *Poems* of Emerson whom she was perhaps to see shortly when he came to Amherst on the first of several visits. Ben Newton soon left her father's office to begin his own practice in Worcester. Here he was married to a woman somewhat older than himself. Not long after he succumbed to an illness. Hearing of his death, Emily Dickinson wrote a letter to his minister in Worcester to ask in what state of mind her thoughtful friend had died. In the spring of the year following Newton's death, she, now a girl of twenty-three, went to Washington to visit her father who was then a member of the Congress. The trip may have been planned with the intention of giving a lift for her spirits.

On her way back from Washington she visited with friends in Philadelphia who, it would appear, took her to the Arch Street Presbyterian Church where she heard one of the notable preachers of the day, the Reverend Charles Wadsworth. She met this minister, and though he was much older than herself and a married man, she fell in love with him. During the next years she saw him perhaps only the few times when, during visits with friends in nearby Northampton, he came over to Amherst to call on "his distant parishioner." When one day in 1860 he appeared in the Dickinson drawing-room wearing mourning, Emily may for an ironic moment (her biographer supposes) have thought that there was a chance for her. In the following year Wadsworth was called from Philadelphia to a church in California. The personal tragedy had no brighter background than the Civil War, then in its initial year. She sang, she said, "off charnel steps." The death-blows were a life-blow, for she wrote poetry constantly in the winter of 1861 and 1862.

Now began that withdrawal from the world which in ten years' time was to be made absolute. "I do not cross my father's ground to any house or town." Fortunately, the grounds of her family's hand-

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO QUARTERLY, vol. XX, no. 1, Oct., 1950

some red-brick mansion were comfortably extensive. Her Gibraltar was not tiny. Her one concession to society in these years was to appear at the teas her father gave on Wednesday of Commencement week. Dressed in the white gown of the "nun of Amherst," she would sweep quickly through the parlour among the guests and as quickly disappear. The years that saw her confirmed in her retreat brought her friend back from the Pacific to Philadelphia, and notes now went to him in letters redirected by a friend. "Going to him! Happy letter!" But she did not see him again until a summer evening in 1880, in Amherst. When she asked how long it had taken him to make this journey, he answered in good humour, "Twenty years." This was their last meeting. She died six years later.

The poetry written out of this experience is surely not exceeded in passion and in imaginative discovery by any poetry in English. Its multiple effects are perhaps in some way dependent upon the use of vast images in frequent combination with silence, giving us something at once as moving and as complete as the world itself.

> Why do I love thee, Sir?
> Because—
> The wind does not
> Require the grass
> To answer wherefore, when
> He pass,
> She cannot keep her place.
>
> The lightning never asked
> An eye
> Wherefore she shut
> When he was by—
> Because he knows
> She cannot speak,
> And reasons not contained
> Of talk
> There be—preferred by daintier folk.

Here is a similar imagery in lines of another poem.

> I got so I could hear his name
> Without—
> Tremendous gain!—
> That stop-sensation in my soul,
> And thunder in the room.

And here now is a poem that draws its large and quiet images from the old cosmic voyage.

It was a quiet way
He asked if I was his.
I made no answer of the tongue
But answer of the eyes.

And then he bore me high
Before this mortal noise,
With swiftness as of chariots
And distance as of wheels.

The world did drop away
As countries from the feet
Of him that leaneth in balloon
Upon an ether street.

The gulf behind was not—
The continents were new.
Eternity it was—before
Eternity was due.

No seasons were to us—
It was not night nor noon,
For sunrise stopped upon the place
And fastened it in dawn.

There is another woman's voice in English poetry speaking of love in the language of earth and heaven, and that is the voice of Shakespeare's Cleopatra. And in her last act, when she is discovering the full grandeur of the lost Antony, she especially makes use of this absolute imagery.

His legs bestrid the ocean; his rear'd arm
Crested the world; his voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;
But when he meant to quail and shake the orb,
He was as rattling thunder. For his bounty,
There was no winter in 't, an autumn 'twas
That grew the more by reaping; his delights
Were dolphin-like, they show'd his back above
The element they liv'd in; in his livery
Walk'd crowns and crownets, realms and islands were
As plates dropp'd from his pocket.

We discover that Emily Dickinson once said of her love, "He was a dusk gem, born of troubled waters, astray in any crest below." It may, I think, be supposed that Emily Dickinson came to identify herself with Shakespeare's great heroine who like herself loved and lost the husband of another, and who too was left to work out her own life in an important last act of personal agony and "piercing memories."

Readers of her poetry must know how her imagination loved to linger on the shores of northern Africa. Readers of Mr. Whicher's study will see more of that imaginative habit. The ground of oaks in her father's garden she spoke of as her "Gibraltar remnant." "At rare intervals," the biographer tells us, "a travelling circus passed the Dickinson house, and Emily, who cared nothing for the performance, would sit at her window all night if necessary to see the 'Algerian procession' go by." Further we know that this "Empress of Calvary" liked what was regal and royal. Palaces, diadems, chariots, flagons and tankards of pearl, ermine and velvet and tulle, mazarin and cochineal—these are the silver principle of her poetry when it is not reduced to plain hard New England fare. But to speak of Shakespeare's Egyptian Queen: like her Emily Dickinson is the spirit of variety and infinite change, moodily shifting between the royal and the homely, the lyrical and the off-key. The identification, we feel, was definite, and we begin in fact to see the story itself of Antony and Cleopatra lying within the shadow of her poetry, held in that same intoxication of Shakespeare's story, and set too in those same afternoon hours of warm maturity and mystic luxury which preceded the rush into the house of death.

Antony first saw Cleopatra the afternoon she sailed on the Cydnus in her barge of the silver oars. Wearing the golden gown she was to call for at her death, she was attended by her Nereides while young boys cooled her glowing person with fans of many colours. Antony seeing her that afternoon, immediately lost his heart. That evening they dined together, but he could eat nothing. Now here is Emily Dickinson's verse.

> Love, thou art deep,
> I cannot cross thee,
> But were there two
> Instead of one,
> Rower and yacht some sov'reign summer,
> Who knows but we'd reach the sun?

We remember Cleopatra's later betrayal of Antony, when in their supposed joint war against Caesar she proceeded to look for her own peace with the enemy. To escape her lover's anger when he discovered this betrayal she took refuge in her monument, from which point of safety she sent to him the false report that she had taken her life. And then, just as Antony had rushed to follow her and lay dying of his wound, the true report came to him. Now in his agony we hear him but ask to be taken to the monument where we see the last grace

of a man whose love could forgive any act whatever in this woman he loved. At last now, in this time of death and memory, Cleopatra begins her imaginative discovery, and we move quickly with her rising vision, at once ethical and metaphysical, as she of the infinite variety becomes "marble constant." And now to her monument comes the victorious Caesar, defeater of Antony, ready to offer her any deceptive terms that will keep her alive to appear in his Roman triumph. The picture of the Emperor suing to this redeemed and determined Queen imposes surely upon this well-known Dickinson poem.

> The soul selects her own society,
> Then shuts the door;
> On her divine majority
> Obtrude no more.
>
> Unmoved, she notes the chariot's pausing
> At her low gate;
> Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
> Upon her mat.
>
> I've known her from an ample nation
> Choose one;
> Then close the valves of her attention
> Like stone.

There is much in Emily Dickinson that reminds us of the dying Cleopatra. We see them together in their gowns of devotion—one in golden tissue, the other in her uniform of snow. But inwardly we also see them together in a devotion to that discovery which comes in the presence of suffering and defeat and death, "that bareheaded life, under the grass." Both went by the dry little road to that very small house which, once one is inside, suddenly takes on the proportions of a rainbow.

Our belief that Emily Dickinson identified herself with Cleopatra could have other support in her general esteem of strong feminine spirits—a Charlotte Bronte, the "gigantic" Emily. She watched "like a vulture" for the appearance of Mr. Cross's life of George Eliot, which would tell the story of another love outside of marriage. In her bedroom hung pictures of Marian Evans and Elizabeth Browning. For Mrs. Browning and George Sand she used a single phrase of eulogy, "Women, now, queens, now!"—a phrasing to be drawn from the last scenes of *Antony and Cleopatra.*

Much more very direct evidence could be brought forth to unite Emily Dickinson and Cleopatra, but one would not wish matters of

this kind made too clear, especially in dealing with a poet whose chief spirit was elusiveness. For the moment let the matter rest with that interesting later opinion of this poet, namely, that Shakespeare alone is essential.

Biographically our supposition has perhaps no further importance than that of adding a real measure of irony to a New England love story,

> My gypsy face transfigured now
> To tenderer renown.

But for the poetry the hypothesis is possibly little less than a key to unlock a poetic language and diction, which, like the heart itself, favoured the Roman.

THOMAS MANN'S *BUDDENBROOKS:* THE WORLD OF THE FATHER

HENRY C. HATFIELD

WHILE Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain,* his *Joseph,* and a few of his short stories have become classic works in this country, his first novel, *Buddenbrooks,* has been less fortunate. It is in some danger of being assigned a place in the perspective of literary history as one of those books which are generally respected but seldom read. Such a destiny would be unmerited and unfortunate, for *Buddenbrooks* is of a calibre comparable to that of any of Mann's works; as a narrative, indeed as a novel in the classical sense, it very probably surpasses them.

T. S. Eliot once remarked on the "usefulness" of a type of poetry "which could cut across all the present stratifications of public taste," and cited the plays of Shakespeare, with their "several layers of significance" as examples of works of the desired universality of appeal. Eliot was writing only of poetry, but his *aperçu* illuminates the enormous success of *Buddenbrooks.* Essentially a rather complicated and deeply pessimistic book, it has an abundance of sheer narration, of humour, of easily grasped character and local colour, which make its vast popularity natural enough; and also a certain sympathetic warmth in dealing with character which is more agreeable to most readers than the cool temperature of the early novellas. One need know nothing of Wagner or Schopenhauer, of the theory of decadence or the metaphysical allure of death, to find the novel absorbing, and this is all to the good. Nor need one have heard of the *leit-motif* to feel the effect of Mann's repetitions; indeed it would be difficult to miss most of them. To say this is not, of course, to disparage the less obvious attractions of the book: its tendency and meaning, its overtones and associations. The comparison with Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga,* sometimes facilely and misleadingly made, can be enlightening. *Buddenbrooks,* besides its popular elements, has precisely what the *Saga* does not: the broad range of "layers of significance," unexpected finesses, and a technique which, if at times obviously used, points ahead from the straightforward historical arrangement of nineteenth-century narration to the musical complexities of the novel of the twentieth century. Mann's own reference to Wagner's *Ring* (also, in a sense, a "Decline of a Family") furnishes a needed clue.

Despite "scruples and doubts" about the scope and nature of the book, Mann completed *Buddenbrooks* in about two-and-a-half years;

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO QUARTERLY, vol. XX, no. 1, Oct., 1950

it was published late in 1900. The actual writing was begun in Italy, where he spent a year with his brother Heinrich. Yet there is no trace of the South in the novel. This was no "Italian journey" in Goethe's sense, it had nothing to do with the traditional attempt of the German writer to experience the Mediterranean and classic world; it was rather a period of deliberate self-isolation, which afforded no doubt perspective and concentration on his work. Mann tells us that his mood at the time was made up of "indolence, a bad conscience as a bourgeois, and the secure sense of latent talents." For the "bad conscience" there were presumably two reasons: his rejection of any sort of middle-class career, and his choice of the decay of his own family as a subject. At times, Mann must have felt that he was committing an indiscretion if not a downright betrayal. Thomas Buddenbrook is closely modelled after Mann's own father, and his exotic wife Gerda would seem, to a lesser extent, reminiscent of Mann's mother, Julia Da Silva-Bruhns. Psychologically, the novel may be said to represent a sort of reckoning with the father image by a young man who has broken with the family tradition and gone off to carry on a "questionable" existence in Munich and Italy. He has rejected the ancestral firm, business, the whole world of Lübeck; his revolt has been successful and, outwardly, not very difficult, but a sense of guilt and remorse remains. The reckoning is unusually gentle, as such things go; the rejection reluctant. Sympathy and admiration for the father's world persist, and with them the chronic bad conscience of the Mannian hero. Without this ambivalence towards the burgher, so different from the harsh single-mindedness of Heinrich Mann, Mann's view of the world would be clearer and sharper, but his books cooler and less "felt." As he states in *Tonio Kröger,* the problematic love for the bourgeois world represented by his father and arbitrarily called the "normal" was one of the strongest forces impelling him to write. The same emotion must have produced the psychological tension, the "charge," which saves *Buddenbrooks* from being only another family novel.

Buddenbrooks then is profoundly autobiographical, but it stands also in a European literary tradition. Mann had a great debt to his predecessors in the novel of the nineteenth century—Scandinavian, French, and Russian. From German writers, with one or two exceptions, he took little. Theodor Storm attracted him by a certain dexterity in the creation of a mood of sentimental reminiscence, and by a not unskilful use of the *leit-motif*. Theodor Fontane, the most distinguished figure in the German novel of the eighties and nineties, had more to offer: a drily realistic style, a benevolent irony, a flair for

social nuances, understatement, and civilized conversation. An aristocrat by temperament, Fontane found the bourgeoisie problematic as well as comic. But what was Fontane compared to the Goncourts, Zola, or Tolstoy; what was Berlin to Paris or St. Petersburg?

Yet Mann's most immediate indebtedness was to less spectacular figures, to Scandinavian writers such as Alexander Kielland and Jonas Lie, whose subject-matter was allied to his own. Lübeck, as a Hanseatic city, was in a sense spiritually closer to the North than to Munich or Berlin; and since Ibsen, the Norwegians had enjoyed a great and often inflated reputation in the Reich. Lie and Kielland were both men of solid, unspectacular talent. The former's *The Family at Gilje* (1883), a novel dealing with the middle class, concerns itself largely with the lot of women who have to make marriages of convenience; the frustrated love between Inger-Johanna and the student Grip, a somewhat advanced and unconventional person, may have served as a model for the far more moving idyll between Toni Buddenbrook and Morten Schwarzkopf. Lie's genre pictures, the Christmas scene at Gilje, for instance, may have given Mann some useful hints, but one should not overstress the value to Mann of this rather undistinguished book. Alexander Kielland had more to offer. He was an elegant, cultivated, and rather complicated figure, who combined naturalistic seriousness with irony and self-irony, and democratic tendencies with pride in his upper-class background. "He had himself sprung from one of these rich ship-owning, patrician families," and it seems clear that Mann must have felt a considerable affinity with him. The Hanseatic side of Kielland is obvious in his *Garman and Worse* (1885), which might well have been sub-titled "Decline of a Family" or "Decay of a Shipping Firm." His short stories, like Mann's, show a double heritage: the *Novelletter* (1879; translated as *Tales of Two Countries* in 1891) are located partly in Norway, partly in Paris. The protagonists in "Two Friends," a novella of the love-hatred between a responsible burgher and a ne'er-do-well, afford a certain parallel to Thomas and Christian Buddenbrook.

The analogy between *Buddenbrooks* and Zola's "Rougon-Macquart" series, *Histoire naturelle et sociale d'une famille sous le second Empire,* has been noted; and surely Mann's novel would have been very different—less solid, detailed, and documented—without the French precedent. There is no reason to question Mann's statement that he had not read Zola at the time he was composing *Buddenbrooks;* it was not necessary—Zola was in the air. (It was M. G. Conrad, one of Zola's major followers in Germany, who had published Mann's first novella in his *Die Gesellschaft,* a leading naturalistic journal.)

Yet Mann's debt to the "more artistic" Goncourt brothers was greater as well as more direct. For all of its naturalistic touches, *Buddenbrooks* is not intended as a "slice of life," but as a carefully arranged composition. Mann read *Renée Mauperin,* he tells us, "again and again, with delight in its lightness, successful execution and precision," with "admiration which became productive." As originally planned, *Buddenbrooks* was to have been in scope and in manner much closer to the examples of the Goncourts than was the book that was actually written: a tightly organized novel of barely 300 pages, centred on the last two generations. Something intervened. Mann speaks of the sheer mass of material furnished by a faithful Lübeck friend. More fundamental no doubt were his characteristic desire to get at the bottom of things, to go back as far as possible behind the coulisses of time, and his equally characteristic conviction that "only the thorough is truly interesting." This was not the only time in Mann's career that a relatively modest plan was to eventuate in a monumental book; the work, as he put it, showed a will of its own. *The Magic Mountain* and *Joseph* were to be even more strikingly transformed in the process of composition.

To return to the Goncourts, Mann intended, at one point, to emulate even their process of fraternal collaboration; his brother Heinrich was to take over the historical aspects of the novel. This notion was of course abandoned, but *Renée Mauperin* did provide insights into middle-class psychology which proved really useful, in its stress on the "reign of money," on business "ideals"—one thinks of the "practical ideals" of the second Johann Buddenbrook—and on the pride of bourgeois families. The skilfully distressing account of the heroine's prolonged illness may have strengthened Mann's inclination to treat scenes of disease, death, and decay.

Mann's debt to Tolstoy is more difficult to describe. He has testified that *Anna Karenina* "strengthened" him while he was writing *Buddenbrooks*. It would be difficult to think of two novels more different in spirit; very likely it was precisely the dissimilarity of the Russian work which he found helpful. Mr. André von Gronicka has argued that Mann learned the technique of the *leit-motif* in part from Tolstoy and Merezhovsky. Aside from this point, it is not tangible "influences" that are important here; one may speak rather of a certain affinity in Mann to Tolstoy's epic breadth and unhurried pace, of another "admiration which became productive."

To deal with the fortunes of four generations of Buddenbrooks, Mann found that he needed over 700 pages, divided among a host of chapters which are organized into eleven parts. For all its bulk, the

novel has structure: the prestige and power of the family rise, reach a sort of plateau, and then imperceptibly slip into a decline which gradually gathers a terrifying momentum. It is Thomas, the central figure of the third generation, on whom the welfare of the family comes essentially to depend, so that the crisis of his life is also the crisis of the novel. The failures of his brother and sister, both obvious by the centre of the work, isolate him increasingly, and the slow erosion of his strength makes inevitable the fall of the whole group.

This group does not exist in a vacuum; Mann shows its life against the background of the patrician city-state of Lübeck, in whose oligarchic government the Buddenbrooks play a considerable role. Farther in the background, we are aware of the evolution of Germany from 1835 to about 1878: the emergence of German unity, prosperity, and material power as reflected in the customs union among the German states, the victorious Prussian wars with Denmark, Austria, and France, and the sharp rise of commerce and trade. The broader developments are briefly mentioned without didactic digressions; the focus is always upon the Buddenbrooks as a particular group of very special individuals. In other words, Mann is by no means writing a symbolical novel of the German middle class, which was rising to new heights of prosperity; he has chosen a family atypical in its decline.

Buddenbrooks is a novel of tradition as well as of decadence; the one implies the other. For the tradition of the patrician burgher, quite different from that of the "ordinary" middle class, Mann has profound respect. It stands for activity, energy, a degree of cultivation, and certain not too rigorous ethical standards, for "life" in a good sense. Despite ironic indications—fewer than one would expect—that the burgher's devotion to money is extreme, Mann is clearly on his side. There is no implication that the Buddenbrooks have amassed an undue amount of wealth; on the contrary, when the family bank balance sinks, we feel that the world is out of joint. Before their decline begins, the Buddenbrooks accept the business world in a robust, unquestioning way. Only in the third generation, with Thomas, do they become too delicate for the ethics of competition, only the sick Buddenbrook questions a *laissez-faire* capitalism. (Thomas, after a business reversal, perceives that his "best friends" react not with sympathy but with frigid distrust; he is weary and sensitive enough to take this as a personal injury.) Before that point, the Darwinian struggle for survival is taken as a matter of course. Not that the Buddenbrooks are Nietzschean buccaneers. "My son, engage joyfully in business during the day, but make only such deals that we can sleep well at night" is

their motto—a very bourgeois code, but still a code. Without hypocrisy, one must be deeply concerned in preserving the appearance of solidity and respectability. Bankruptcy is the unforgivable sin. Thomas's feckless brother, Christian, can be excused for his failures, his sexual divagations, even his idleness; but when he remarks that every business man is "really a swindler," no pardon is possible; his brother, a person by no means given to melodramatic gestures, is driven to pronounce a downright curse on him. The ideal Buddenbrook is a non-religious church-goer whose ethic might have served as an instance of the inner bond between Protestantism and capitalism argued by Max Weber and Tawney. Religious fervour is suspect—it is not "solid"; music is still more so; and Thomas's taste for French novels and habit of citing Heine are clearly indications of danger.

Occasionally, Mann does treat his worthy patricians ironically, as in the repeated accounts of their fabulous meals, but his identification with them is too close for him to depart often from the tone of respect. His most ironic pages deal with the liberal bourgeoisie and the hopelessly docile working class. Thus the young student, Morten Schwarzkopf, believes ardently in the ideals of the ill-fated German liberal revolt of 1848: abolition of class distinctions, academic freedom, freedom of the press, and all the rest. He is a charming fellow, but clearly naïve; we cannot take him seriously. When the "revolution" breaks out in Lübeck, the novel enters the realm of farce. The "people" break a few windows, demonstrate aimlessly for some hours, and then are sent home in good humour after some friendly words of paternal advice by the younger Johann Buddenbrook. Undoubtedly this account has a good deal of historical validity. One is reminded of Trotsky's remark that the German workers would not seize a railway station unless they had bought tickets first. In any case Mann's personal sympathies are clearly with the conservative side, where they remained until after the defeat of 1918.

Yet despite this affectionate respect for the patrician tradition, the theme of decadence clearly predominates. Decay is considered as an inevitable spiritual and biological process, not as an occasion of moral reproach. It is most strikingly shown in the succession of four male Buddenbrooks, three of whom are heads of the ancestral firm. Johann Buddenbrook, Sr. is a type of the eighteenth century as popularly conceived—rationalistic, optimistic, sceptical, and of uncomplicated, single-minded energy. His son, the younger Johann, is an excellent business man and devoted to money; but his sentimental religiosity causes a split in his nature which leads to unconscious hypocrisy and "practical ideals." The Buddenbrooks are on the way

to becoming problematic. With Thomas Buddenbrook they have become so. Thomas is the most appealing and impressive of the line. Cultivated, able, and enormously conscientious, he guides the family to its greatest successes, but he has no real belief in the value of his enterprises; his energies are eaten away.

Despite all his efforts, he cannot overcome the somehow innate tendency to dissolution which has overtaken the family like a sort of fate. At one point (VIII, 4)[1] he violates the traditional ethics of the firm in a desperate effort to recoup its fortunes, but the manœuvre fails. After long and bitter struggles, he is utterly defeated. Yet his prolonged endeavour gives him stature: he has much of that "heroism of weakness" which Mann so greatly admires, and which he was to represent later in the more impressive figures of Schiller in *A Weary Hour,* and of Gustav von Aschenbach. In Aristotelian terms, Thomas's flaw may be said to lie in his externality, evident in his sacrifice of human values to the welfare of the firm, and in his supreme concern for maintaining appearances. As his *élan vital* decreases, he is forced more and more to mask his actual condition. Only Hanno, the most sensitive of the family, fully perceives this.

Shortly before his death, Thomas has an experience which could have saved him, spiritually speaking, but he lacks the force and courage to hold it in his grasp. More or less by chance he comes upon a volume of Schopenhauer and finds in it a source of metaphysical ecstasy. His cares suddenly appear unspeakably petty and indeed irrelevant; his own individuality and even that of his son seem unimportant.

> Have I hoped to live on in my son? In a personality yet more feeble, flickering, and timorous than my own? Blind, childish folly! What can my son do for me—what need have I of a son? Where shall I be when I am dead? Ah, it is so brilliantly clear, so overwhelmingly simple! I shall be in all those who have ever, do ever, or ever shall say "I"—*especially, however, in all those who say it most fully, potently, and gladly.*[2] (X, 5)

Schopenhauer—or better, Schopenhauer modified by Nietzsche—could then have freed him from the tortures inflicted by the will. But he lacks the intellectual energy to maintain himself on these philosophical heights. He never opens the book again. One feels that this failure, like the others, is due less to any tangible defect in Thomas than to that inner weariness which, Mann implies, must be taken as given and lies beyond explanation.

Mann has made no secret of the fact that he has attributed to his not very intellectual hero a metaphysical experience of his own. One

[1] References to *Buddenbrooks* are to part and chapter.
[2] *Buddenbrooks,* trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York, 1946), 527.

admires all the more the tact and skill which make the episode credible, and the control which keeps ideology in its place. *Buddenbrooks,* in this regard, is more of a work of art than most of the later novels.

While Thomas, in his way, is a tragic figure, Hanno is pathetic. He is possessed of some musical talent but lacks the strength for any sort of career, let alone that of restoring the shaken fortunes of the family. He is phenomenally sickly, and dies while still a schoolboy, physically of sickness but essentially of decadence. With him the family comes to an end. The theme of successive and cumulative decline is repeated in a number of lesser figures.

What happens to the Buddenbrooks is a decline only from the point of view of normality. As always, Mann shows the opposite aspect: in terms of "the spirit" the process is one of ascent to greater awareness and intellectuality, to art, and to—death. Life and the spirit are irreconcilable foes; there is no hope, in Mann's early thought, of a possible synthesis, and the suggestion of a possible *juste milieu* would have been rejected as childishly optimistic. Mann clearly implies in *Buddenbrooks* that the game of the spirit is not worth the candle. Not until *Tonio Kröger* does he reach a rather wry acceptance of the life and role of the anormal, artistic person.

Decadence then is inevitable and has a potentially creative aspect, but it is greatly to be feared. Mann devotes all his powers of naturalistic description and all his psychological subtlety to the development of the theme. It is with the sentimental religiosity of the younger Johann Buddenbrook that feelings "other than the normal, everyday sentiments proper to good citizens" enter the family tradition and begin to alienate it from life. From this point, early in the novel, until the horrible death of the adolescent Hanno, the process takes its inexorable course. (At times Mann implies a dubious biology: decay would seem to be in the blood.) Largely it is seen as a physical development: all the later Buddenbrooks are labile, they tend to migraines, carious teeth, premature aging, and "bluish shadows below the eyes." The terms "nervous" and "exhausted" occur again and again. But primarily the evolution is psychological: with greater self-consciousness come extreme subjectivity and introversion. Energy, and finally the will to live itself, fall away; it is Hanno's lack of *élan vital* that makes him succumb to typhus. In him, as earlier in Christian, the "death wish" becomes obvious. Loyalty to the family and the firm gradually becomes a problem, and then an insoluble one. Artistic, and above all musical, endowment is not merely a symptom of the decline; it is a causal factor. Christian, the artist *manqué,* is merely grotesque, but Gerda and her son Hanno are mortally threat-

ened. In Gerda's affair with Lieutenant von Throta, music is linked, as so often in Mann, to illicit love; for Hanno, it is his chief solace, but also his greatest danger. The cumulative effect of the workings of the forces of decay is such that one welcomes Hanno's death as a release too long withheld.

Looking back on the novel, we realize with what careful persistence Mann has developed the theme of death as a force possessed of an uncanny fascination. This note is first sounded briefly, without apparent emphasis, during the last illness of the wife of the elder Johann Buddenbrook. "Something new, alien, extraordinary seemed to have entered the house, a secret which they read in each other's eyes; the thought of death had gained admission and ruled silently. . . ." It is struck again and again, with increasing frequency and force. Schopenhauer makes death seem a boon to Thomas in his worst days; and Hanno's boyhood is so filled with funerals that it is almost an education for dying. The smell of death, "the alien and yet so familiar odour," repels and yet attracts him, as it was later to attract Hans Castorp.

That death should play a part of central importance in a story of decline is hardly surprising, but Mann elaborates on the theme in a way which goes far beyond what the inherent logic of the situation or the tenets of naturalism could demand. It becomes increasingly obvious that he found death (or what the Germans curiously call the "problem" of death) more important, more interesting, more germane to his talents than life. It is here above all that he appears as the heir of German romanticism. Not that he indulges in any facile raptures; he is far too much the conscientious observer for that. One needs to recall only the famous chapter on typhus (XI, 3), or the picture of Thomas Buddenbrook after his collapse on the street: "Since the street sloped sharply downwards, the upper part of his body was quite a bit lower than his feet. He had fallen on his face, from under which a pool of blood at once began to spread out. His hat rolled down a way on the road. His fur coat was spattered with filth and melting snow. His hands, in their white kid gloves, lay outstretched in a puddle."

As the novel of the eighteenth century tended to end in a marriage or series of marriages, *Buddenbrooks* draws to its close in a succession of deaths. At the beginning of the last section, four minor characters are dispatched on a single page (XI, 1). The development of the theme reaches its climax in the chapter which recounts Hanno's death of typhus. This follows immediately, with all the shock of suddenness, upon an ironic, in part almost comic, account of

Hanno's day at the gymnasium. "A case of typhus takes the following course." Picturing the disease as a general force strengthens its impact by making its power more impersonal, greater, and more ghastly. Mann withholds no clinical detail, but he has given these pages an eloquence and rhythm of their own. Hanno's illness is transformed into a drama; the crisis is dramatic as well as medical; and it is a psychological force, not the illness as such, that prevails.

The account of the onset of typhus is one of the high points of German naturalism, and it is only one of many passages in *Buddenbrooks* which demonstrate that Mann had little more to learn about exact observation and description. Whether or not the story that Mann once scrutinized a departing friend through opera-glasses is true, it is highly credible; when one reads that Grünlich had put "a little powder on the wart on the left side of his nose" on the day of his wedding with Toni Buddenbrook (III, 14), one thinks of Zeiss glasses and telescopic lenses. Permaneder, who succeeds him in Toni's affections, is described (IV, 4) with equal accuracy but less malice. One notes also, especially in the first part, the careful documentation to give historical flavour. Mann's method is phonographic as well as photographic, employing Bavarian dialect as well as *Plattdeutsch,* and reproducing even the curiously modified vowels of Sesemi Weichbrodt's dialect.

But there is much more here than naturalistic reproduction. As so often, Mann displays his flair for giving the effect of a musical work, above all in his account of Hanno's composition.

> Soft and clear as a bell sounded the E minor chord, tremolo pianissimo, amid the purling, flowing notes of the violin. It swelled, it broadened, it slowly, slowly rose: suddenly, in the forte, he introduced the discord C sharp, which led back to the original key, and the Stradivarius ornamented it with its welling and singing. He dwelt on the dissonance until it became fortissimo. But he denied himself and his audience the resolution; he kept it back. What would it be, this resolution, this enchanting, satisfying absorption into the B major chord? A joy beyond compare, a gratification of overpowering sweetness! Peace! Bliss! The kingdom of Heaven: only not yet—not yet! A moment more of striving, hesitation, suspense, that must become well-nigh intolerable in order to heighten the ultimate moment of joy.[3] (VIII, 6)

His use of light, his feeling for subtle gradations of colour as well as for brilliance, relate him closely to the impressionistic school. Thus he writes in description of a warm January day (X, 7): "The pavement was wet and dirty, and snow was dripping from the gray gables.

[3] *Buddenbrooks*, Lowe-Porter trans., 413. The other translations from *Buddenbrooks* in this article are my own.

But above them the sky stretched delicate blue and unmarred, and billions of atoms of light seemed to glitter like crystals in the azure and to dance." The scene around the Buddenbrooks' Christmas tree (VIII, 8) is a Manet in words; the whole picture is constructed of a multitude of lights: the countless flames of little candles, the larger lights, the reflections. Mann is equally successful with softer tones, as in this sentence describing an interior just as night is falling: "The colours in the room, the tones of the landscapes on the walls, the yellow of the furniture and the curtains had faded, one could no longer see the play of nuances in Toni's dress or the brightness in people's eyes" (IV, 11).

The *leit-motif* is employed prodigally in *Buddenbrooks,* and put to a variety of uses, from the rather trivial to the broadly symbolic. It can emphasize a purely physical characteristic, such as Toni's "somewhat prominent upper lip" or Gerda's dark-red hair. More importantly, it can pick out a physical trait which has psychological significance: Tom's nervousness, either explicitly stated or implied by repeated mention of his Russian cigarettes; or the bluish shadows below Gerda's eyes. The extension of such a motif from one character to another of course establishes a bond between the two: thus Toni later shares in Tom's nervousness, and Hanno "inherits" his mother's bluish shadows. (That he possesses this sign of weariness at the age of four weeks (VII, 1) would seem to be an instance of the triumph of theory over artistic judgment.)

A repeated word or phrase can of course characterize the speaker: thus the insuperably childish Toni never outgrows the word *vornehm* (upper-class; "ritzy"); or a motif can be used with humorous intent or for a dozen other purposes. It is most successfully employed, however, as a device of reminiscence; this sort of *leit-motif* can call up a whole cluster of associations and psychological subtleties. To have its full, "musical" value, the associations evoked must be emotionally charged; the motif with purely descriptive or ironic intent, such as "who associated with the best families," has a far less powerful appeal, and its repeated use tends more easily to weary the reader. Broadly speaking, the motifs of *Buddenbrooks* do not have as much emotional content, so to speak, as those of later works, notably *Tonio Kröger* and *The Magic Mountain.* There is one very striking exception: the phrase "to sit on the stones," ultra-prosaic though it seems, is used both subtly and movingly. Toni's first lover had been obliged to sit on a pile of stones while she chatted with upper-class friends; then the phrase came to mean, to the two of them, "to be neglected and lonely"; after giving up her lover, Toni uses the phrase again and

again, in all sorts of contexts, sometimes without herself remembering, apparently, the whole richness of association. But the alert reader does remember, and the five words revivify a whole series of recollections, causing the story of Toni to "be all there in a given moment."

This economy of means, which makes the *leit-motif* a sort of shorthand for the emotions, is perhaps its chief merit. When used too often, as occasionally towards the end of *Buddenbrooks,* the device can very easily become as wearisome as an old family joke.

The manipulation of a variety of other techniques shows how far from the novel of naturalism *Buddenbrooks* really is. There is, for example, the use of contrast. After telling of a particularly depressing incident in the life of Thomas Buddenbrook, Mann shifts quickly to the music of Bach; it is no accident that the discussion centres on counterpoint (VIII, 6). A similar contrapuntal effect is produced by the introduction of the Christmas festival as a pleasant interlude within the sordid story of Herr Weinschenk's troubles with the law (VIII, 8). Musical also is the effect of acceleration gained at the end through the rapidly repeated blows of death and disaster and the accumulation of the evidences of decay. Probably Mann gives us too much of a good thing—that the Buddenbrooks' dentist, for instance, is decadent too would seem to be a clear case of piling Ossa on Pelion; it may be that the influence of Wagner has something to do with this tendency towards excess. Possibly Mann's later device, so notable in *Joseph,* of repeating a whole incident, or re-introducing, under another name, a character who is archetypically the same as one who has preceded him, is foreshadowed in his first novel. Thus Toni's first husband, Grünlich, turns out to be a swindler, and the marriage ends in divorce; her daughter Erika goes through fundamentally the same experience with Hugo Weinschenk.

Buddenbrooks is an end and a beginning. After writing incomparably the best of German family novels Mann abandoned the genre, and never again was he to come so close to the pure epic. *Buddenbrooks* is obviously the least problematic and complex of his major works, but it is not without its paradoxes: realistic in manner, it is romantic in spirit; abundant in Dickensian *Gemütlichkeit,* its essence is the mood of "the cross, death, and the grave"; apparently unilinear in its treatment of time, it uses the *leit-motif* on occasion to give the effect of emotional simultaneity. From the perspective of half a century, one can see how the technical innovations of the novel point forward to more experimental works to come.

WILLA CATHER'S NOVELS OF THE FRONTIER: THE SYMBOLIC FUNCTION OF "MACHINE-MADE MATERIALISM"

EDWARD A. BLOOM AND LILLIAN D. BLOOM

THAT Willa Cather never reconciled herself to the age and society in which she lived has long been a truism enunciated by her critics and apologists. So truistic, indeed, has been the general critical attitude that the precise nature of her disaffection has yet to be clearly defined. And without such definition there can be no clear understanding of the basic theses underlying Miss Cather's novels. "In Nebraska," she wrote at the height of her career, "as in so many other States, we must face the fact that the splendid story of the pioneers is finished, and that no new story worthy to take its place has yet begun."[1] Behind this statement are two premises that are prominent in her novels of the frontier. The first is that the pioneer principle has been the only valid test of man's spirituality through all ages. The second is that anti-spiritual forces have always warred against pure idealism and that these forces have ultimately been destroyed. At the root of the latter optimistic idea is Miss Cather's firm reliance upon historical analogy. This led her to deduce that since spirituality has always emerged triumphant from conflict with disruptive forces, it must always continue to do so. As Miss Cather absorbed into her own work the experiences of many frontiers, Western, Southwestern, Canadian, and even the frontier of the ancient Cliff Dwellers, she saw true idealism over-run and temporarily defeated by "machine-made materialism,"[2] as she terms it. But she observed idealism rising in subsequent eras, revitalized and strengthened; and she was convinced that conflict of this nature has always been elemental in man's perpetual groping toward perfectibility.

While symbolically idealizing throughout her novels of the frontier the lofty theme of mankind's eternal quest for truth, Miss Cather conjunctively develops another symbol which represents her attack upon society's deliberate rejection of ideal values. Dependent upon the context in which it is found, her protest becomes meaningful and symbolical in intent only if it is closely integrated with the other two of Miss Cather's dominating symbols, the land and the historical

[1] "Nebraska: The End of the First Cycle," in *These United States*, 2nd series, ed. Ernest Gruening (New York, 1924), 152. This essay of Miss Cather, little read and seldom used by her critical commentators, is a valuable factual summary of her attitude toward Western expansion.

[2] *Ibid.*, 145.

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ideal, the latter projected through the primitive Cliff Dwellers. For her the land is both test and end of an ethical striving; the historical ideal is the universal, objective proof of man's response to that test. As she observed and recorded these salutary values, it was inevitable that at the same time she should witness and describe the fading of pioneer strength in the West. The result of her vigorous examination of an encroaching degeneration was the angry conclusion that the basic deteriorating force was "machine-made materialism." Miss Cather was completely repelled by the resulting subservience to temporal, debilitating values and the divorce from permanent, ennobling aspirations. "Machine-made materialism" became an epitome of evil, a sign of the renunciation of moral and aesthetic standards that she had earlier found to be the only valid principles of existence. For she envisaged the moral as the seeking of the spirit for a code of behaviour which should be synonymous with perfectibility; and she regarded the aesthetic compounded as it is of desire (which is to her the counterpart of creation, and, hence, aesthetically significant) as an outgrowth of that search.[3]

Making functional and creative use of this abstraction, "machine-made materialism," Miss Cather based upon it a complex symbol incorporating the two specific ramifications of her protest. She represents concretely the first facet of her displeasure, that against immoral acquisitiveness and greed, largely by characterization of land-grabbers, sons of pioneers, and amoral beings like the lost lady, Marian Forrester. And she fulfils her protest against the second, aesthetic degeneration, by drawing ugly, devitalized communities which arose abortively out of the "wild land," the quondam scene of ethical striving. Through these combined elements of the symbol, therefore, Miss Cather's damning implication becomes clear: "machine-made materialism" and its exemplars have at least temporarily made nugatory the spiritual endeavours of all pioneers in all generations, who, ironically, cleared the way for modern exploitation.

Read in the sequence of their publication—except for the logical interchange of *One of Ours* and *A Lost Lady*—the novels of the Western frontier demonstrate clearly Willa Cather's conscious development of the three groups of symbols: those of the land, of the historical ideal, and of "machine-made materialism." This develop-

[3]Willa Cather's theory and application of the symbols of the land and the historical ideal we have examined in a previous article, "Willa Cather's Novels of the Frontier: A Study in Thematic Symbolism," *American Literature*, March, 1949, 71-93.

ment is of realistic significance, for in it the novelist represents the most important era of Western expansion and decline, the last few decades of the nineteenth century. It is in these years that Miss Cather places *O Pioneers!, The Song of the Lark, My Antonia,* and *A Lost Lady.* From the census figures we know that the population of Nebraska, for example, in 1870 was only 123,000. When *O Pioneers!* opens about 1880 the settlement of Nebraska is still relatively sparse. As Miss Cather remarked, "Even as late as 1885 the central part of the State, and everything to the westward, was, in the main, raw prairie."[4] Consequently, in this novel she focuses little attention on material values; her symbolism is concerned primarily with the land and the spiritual drive of the pioneers. By the time of the central action of *The Song of the Lark* and *My Antonia* in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the population of Nebraska had risen to more than one million and towns were becoming numerous. In these last two novels Miss Cather pays increasing symbolic attention to the drab, ugly Western towns and displays in them her disapproval of the new materialism which is rapidly supplanting the old aesthetic and moral ideals. The chief period of *A Lost Lady,* which is the last in the series of Western frontier novels, marks the complete and tragic decline of the West, its subjugation to the unhappy materialism of the new order. As Miss Cather's final commentary upon the triumph of materialism over idealism, *One of Ours*—set a generation later, during the First World War—merits at least cursory attention. For here is the conclusive proof that the land can no longer harbour its former moral and aesthetic strength. Despite her uneasy awareness of this deterioration, Miss Cather never ceased hoping that it was but a temporary phenomenon; and her comment in "Nebraska" is filled with the hope that fills her novels. "Surely the materialism and showy extravagance of this hour are a passing phase! They will mean no more in half a century from now than will the 'hard times' of twenty-five years ago—which are already forgotten."[5]

Although in writing of the declining West, Miss Cather charges society mainly with the abandonment of moral and aesthetic standards, she does not ignore the practical realities of frontier existence. Part of her accusation against society is on the socio-economic level. She is concerned with the inequalities that arise from exploitation and from man's inhumanity to man. She records the decline of the West

[4]"Nebraska," 145.
[5]*Ibid.,* 153.

from a dream of the pioneers to a nightmare of capitalistic enterprise.[6] When the free land was all distributed, the spontaneous initiative of the small landholders vanished. Affluent interests assumed control, dominating the economy of the Western area, replacing with hard, impersonal efficiency the former enthusiasm of the struggling farmers who took a personal pride in the development of the land.[7] The West became what Turner calls a debtor West, building upon borrowed capital, and causing ultimately the defeat of visionary pioneers like Captain Forrester of *A Lost Lady*. The historian Emerson Hough depicts the frontiersmen as "the true dreamers of the nation" who suffered for their impracticality by falling victim to the land-boomers.[8] These were often unprincipled individuals. They, like the villainous, incredible Wick Cutter of *My Antonia,* Willa Cather's sole symbolic portrayal of the land-shark type, thrived on their high rates of interest; or, like Cutter's satanic descendant, Ivy Peters of *A Lost Lady,* they extended their usurious practices so that they not only corrupted but destroyed as well.

Despite her awareness of the economic forces which were brought to bear on the frontier, rarely does Miss Cather protest in the practical manner of realistic observers such as Kirkland, Garland, or Henry George. To be sure, on one occasion she has Claude Wheeler speak with the pseudo-voice of a later Henry George; the hero of *One of Ours* protests against the power of his monopolistic father, philosophizing that "he would rather go out into the world and earn his bread among strangers than sweat under this half-responsibility for acres and crops that were not his own. He knew that his father was sometimes called a 'land hog' by the country people, and he himself had begun to feel that it was not right they should have so much land,—to farm, or to rent, or to leave idle, as they chose. It was strange that in all the centuries the world had been going, the question of property had not been better adjusted. The people who had it were slaves to it, and the people who didn't have it were slaves to them."[9] Two generations earlier Henry George had blamed poverty upon material progress, had demanded the destruction of land mono-

[6]Miss Cather's view of pioneer striving is in part supported by such historians of the American frontier as Frederick Jackson Turner and Carl Becker. Turner maintained that the pioneers were imaginative: "The men and women who made the Middle West were idealists, and they had the power of will to make their dreams come true" (*The Frontier in American History* (New York, 1920), 153). Similarly Carl Becker said: "Idealism must always prevail on the frontier, for the frontier, whether geographical or intellectual, offers little hope to those who see things as they are" ("Kansas," *Essays in American History* (New York, 1910), 95).

[7]Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 245, 321.

[8]*The Passing of the Frontier* (New Haven, 1921), 155 ff.

[9]*One of Ours* (New York, 1922), 80.

polies and the equal distribution of the land.[10] For the most part, however, Miss Cather regards as a moral and aesthetic iniquity the degeneration of idealism into materialism. She leaves it to others to criticize on purely social and economic grounds.

Miss Cather in "Nebraska" has very well synthesized her attitude toward the changes of the West. In representing her love of the land in pioneer days and her regret for the materialistic principles of the present, she distinguishes between two aspects of the advancement of civilization. The first she finds admirable because it has introduced to the farms the genuinely necessary comforts and labour-saving devices that are the pioneers' reward for unremitting effort.[11] Such compensation elicits her approval in *O Pioneers!* and *My Antonia*. The tangible fruits of pioneer success are satisfactorily apparent to Jim Burden of the latter novel who observes: "The old pasture land was now being broken up into wheatfields and cornfields, the red grass was disappearing, and the whole face of the country was changing. There were wooden houses where the old sod dwellings used to be, and little orchards and big red barns; all this meant happy children, contented women, and men who saw their lives coming to a fortunate issue. . . . The changes seemed beautiful and harmonious to me; it was like watching the growth of a great man or of a great idea."[12] But at the same time Miss Cather sees and condemns "the other side of the medal, stamped with the ugly crest of materialism, which has set its seal upon all of our most productive commonwealths."[13] She concludes that taste and manners and the moral sense have been corrupted by motion pictures, prosperity, bad fiction in superabundance. This evil process, which motivates the degeneration of the characters in *One of Ours* and *A Lost Lady*, is also explicitly presented in a passage from "Nebraska."

> The generation that subdued the wild land and broke up the virgin prairie is passing, but it is still there, a group of rugged figures in the background which inspire respect, compel admiration. With these old men and women the attainment of material prosperity was a moral victory, because it was wrung from hard conditions, was the result of a struggle that tested character. They can look out over these broad stretches of fertility and say: "We made this, with our backs and hands." The sons, the generation now in middle life, were reared amid hardships, and it is perhaps natural that they should be very much interested in material comfort, in buying whatever is expensive and ugly. Their

[10] *Progress and Poverty* (4th ed., New York, 1880), 6-12, 370-1.
[11] "Nebraska," 150-1.
[12] *My Antonia* (Boston, 1918), 346. See also pp. 200-1 in the same work. Note the similar passage in *O Pioneers!* (Boston, 1913), 75-6.
[13] "Nebraska," 151.

fathers came into a wilderness and had to make everything, had to be as ingenious as shipwrecked sailors. The generation now in the driver's seat hates to make anything, wants to live and die in an automobile, scudding past those acres where the old men used to follow the long corn-rows up and down. They want to buy everything ready made: clothes, food, education, music, pleasure. Will the third generation—the full-blooded, joyous one just coming over the hill—will it be fooled? Will it believe that to live easily is to live happily.[14]

Here is the concretion of Willa Cather's literary case against materialism and also a key to the thematic direction of her series of Western frontier novels.

When she considers very briefly the problem of materialism in *O Pioneers!* she does so without endowing it with the force of a major symbol. Indeed, her commentary on the practical quality of Western living is couched in terms of approbation; her meditations here concern primarily the salutary aspects of civilized progress. That Alexandra Bergson and her successful pioneer contemporaries have acquired an abundance of tangible goods is a happy omen to Willa Cather; for they wrested "from hard conditions" the profits which are their just reward and which they put to good use. But even in this early book there are at least presentiments of the symbol of "machine-made materialism" which was to emerge fully conceived in later novels. Within the essential theme of pioneer idealism which is fulfilled through the stolid goodness of Alexandra, Miss Cather establishes a condition of potential degeneration. In contrast to Alexandra, the weak brothers, Oscar and Lou Bergson, are among those "scudding past those acres where the old men used to follow the long corn-rows up and down." The novelist concentrates in them traits of venality and bad taste: the brothers are mercenary because they are not self-reliant, because they have an instinctive fear of financial insecurity rooted in remembrance of an impoverished childhood; they are wanting in refinement and sensitivity because they have had in later years too much prosperity. Deriving no inspiration from their pioneer environment, they absorb no satisfaction but that which is offered to them by plodding, back-breaking routine. "Like most of their neighbours, they were meant to follow in paths already marked out for them, not to break trails in a new country." Because of their bovine attitude, they can hope to survive only by acceptance. But that, in effect, is a rejection of the frontier principle, for "a pioneer should have imagination, should be able to enjoy the idea of things more than the things themselves."[15] Their very divorce from the imaginative qualities that make Alexandra a true pioneer invests Oscar and Lou

[14] *Ibid.*, 152.
[15] *O Pioneers!*, 47-8.

with reverence for the essentially unimportant. Indifferent to permanent values, they stupefy themselves with the immediate reality of pointless routine and the material orderliness of fields and barnyards.

> [Oscar] was a man of powerful body and unusual endurance; the sort of man you could attach to a corn-sheller as you would an engine. He would turn it all day, without hurrying, without slowing down. But he was as indolent of mind as he was unsparing of his body. His love of routine amounted to a vice. He worked like an insect, always doing the same thing over in the same way, regardless of whether it was best or no. He felt that there was a sovereign virtue in mere bodily toil, and he rather liked to do things in the hardest way. If a field had once been in corn, he couldn't bear to put it into wheat. He liked to begin his corn-planting at the same time every year, whether the season were backward or forward. He seemed to feel that by his own irreproachable regularity he would clear himself of blame and reprove the weather. When the wheat crop failed, he threshed the straw at a dead loss to demonstrate how little grain there was, and thus prove his case against Providence.
>
> Lou, on the other hand, was fussy and flighty; always planned to get through two days' work in one, and often got only the least important things done. He liked to keep the place up, but he never got round to doing odd jobs until he had to neglect more pressing work to attend to them. In the middle of the wheat harvest, when the grain was over-ripe and every hand was needed, he would stop to mend fences or to patch the harness; then dash down to the field and overwork and be laid up in bed for a week. The two boys balanced each other. . . .[16]

Although the symbol of "machine-made materialism" is an important factor in *O Pioneers!* it is nevertheless subordinate to the positive symbol of the untamed land. Subsequently, however, in *The Song of the Lark* and *My Antonia,* the emphasis undergoes a marked reversal, Miss Cather bringing into sharpened focus her disapproval of the forces of Western exploitation. The most direct manifestation of "machine-made materialism" is the appearance of the small towns which have sprung up all over the prairie. They become the target of her detestation and provide her with a symbol of devastating force. These communities are for her a clearly revealed negation of the idealism of the untamed land. Separately or combined, the prairie towns epitomize for Willa Cather the unfortunate, materialistic compulsion that brought about their creation. That is, she finds them established for the primary satisfaction of material gain, without dedication to any loftier end than man's selfish acquisitiveness. She sees in them appalling ugliness and uniformity that reflect the loss of creative imagination, a trait which she considers essential to the pioneer spirit. As "Crazy Ivar" had said, "The way here is for all to do alike."[17]

[16] *Ibid.*, 55-6. See also p. 45 in the same work.

[17] *Ibid.*, 92. That Willa Cather should have been impressed by the "creative imagination" or individuality of the pioneer is not unusual. It was this same

Miss Cather studies the small towns primarily as symbols of aesthetic disintegration, which she finds inextricably linked with moral disintegration. Thus, identifying the towns with the people who live in them, she imbues Wunsch the music-master with the pessimistic feeling of living "among people whose sole ambition was to get something for nothing."[18] Her towns are drab, uncharitable, and unlovely, marked by the bourgeois pettiness of rigid social strata.

> The Black Hawk boys looked forward to marrying Black Hawk girls and living in a brand-new little house with best chairs that must not be sat upon, and hand-painted china that must not be used. But sometimes a young fellow would look up from his ledger, or out through the grating of his father's bank, and let his eyes follow Lena Lingard, as she passed the window with her slow, undulating walk, or Tiny Soderball, tripping by in her short skirt and striped stockings. . . . The country girls were considered a menace to the social order. Their beauty shone out too boldly against a conventional background. But anxious mothers need have felt no alarm. They mistook the mettle of their sons. The respect for respectability was stronger than any desire in Black Hawk youth.[19]

The artificiality of the towns is but a projection of the artificial codes of their inhabitants.[20] At the same time community living, as Miss Cather sees it, has destroyed creative expression, has dissipated itself beyond redemption: it is "fat with food and drink . . . a spent thing; its chief concern is its digestion and its little game of hide-and-seek with the undertaker. Money and office and success are the consolation of impotence."[21] It has allowed itself to become terrorized by "the fear of the tongue"; it has refused to find "attractive" anything "in its natural state—indeed scarcely anything was decent until it was clothed by the opinion of some authority."[22] Against the people who in creating these communities effectively negated the unselfish motivation of their pioneer forbears, Miss Cather aims a denunciation embittered by the futility of wasted lives.

characteristic that most strongly impressed the historians of the frontier. See Becker, "Kansas," 89 ff.; Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 37. The recognition of the disintegration of individuality into ugly conformity, greed, and hypocrisy is clearly marked by Lewis Mumford, *The Golden Day* (New York, 1926), 80-1.

[18]*The Song of the Lark* (Boston, 1915), 30.

[19]*My Antonia*, 229.

[20]See, for example, *O Pioneers!*, 97-8. The almost whimsical detachment which is apparent in these two passages changes as Miss Cather becomes more certain of her aesthetic credo. For example, in "The Sculptor's Funeral," in *Youth and the Bright Medusa* (New York, 1945), 242, the sculptor's tragedy was "the yearning of a boy, cast ashore upon a desert of newness and ugliness and sordidness, for all that is chastened and old, and noble with traditions."

[21]*The Song of the Lark*, 265.

[22]*Ibid.*, 126, 132.

On starlight nights [says Jim Burden] I used to pace up and down those long, cold streets, scowling at the little sleeping houses on either side, with their storm-windows and covered back porches. They were flimsy shelters, most of them poorly built of light wood, with spindle porch-posts horribly mutilated by the turning lathe. Yet for all their frailness, how much jealousy and envy and unhappiness some of them managed to contain. The life that went on in them seemed to be made up of evasions and negations; shifts to save cooking, to save washing and cleaning, devices to propitiate the tongue of gossip. This guarded mode of existence was like living under a tyranny. People's speech, like their voices, their very glances, became furtive and repressed. Every individual taste, every natural appetite, was bridled by caution. The people asleep in those houses, I thought, tried to live like mice in their own kitchens; to make no noise, to leave no trace, to slip over the surface of things in the dark. The growing piles of ashes and cinders in the back yards were the only evidence that the wasteful consuming process of life went on at all.[23]

Even as Miss Cather's condemnation of small-town living reaches its climax in *My Antonia*, so in this same novel she creates a new type of individual, an individual much more positive in his effects than either the Bergson boys or the inhabitants of prairie towns. Oscar and Lou Bergson typify the fearful little men who have no initiative or imagination. They cling to the safety of routine which will, they hope, protect them from indebtedness and its dreaded legal token, the mortgage. But the mortgage appears in *O Pioneers!* merely as a kind of heavy abstraction detached from any active human agency. Not until *My Antonia* do we see a usurer, the specific human emblem of rapacious greed as he exerts his force on people like the Shimerdas, pioneer counterparts of the Bergsons. Here we view the mortgage as a vicious example of man's avarice, the very essence of the new gross materialism. To develop the idea of greed and to give it the force of a repellently evil symbol, Miss Cather depicts in unfortunately melodramatic terms "Wick Cutter, the merciless Black Hawk moneylender, a man of evil name throughout the county."[24] Typical of his treacherous nature is Cutter's religious hypocrisy. His physical appearance is parasitic and of a softness that belies the crabbed soul within. His entire personality is loathsome.

Cutter's first name was Wycliffe, and he liked to talk about his pious bringing-up. He contributed regularly to the Protestant churches, "for sentiment's sake," as he said with a flourish of the hand. . . . In every frontier settlement there are men who have come there to escape restraint. Cutter was one of the "fast set" of Black Hawk business men.

[23] *My Antonia*, 249-50. [24] *Ibid.*, 57.

He was an inveterate gambler, though a poor loser. . . . Cutter boasted that he never drank anything stronger than sherry, and he said he got his start in life by saving the money that other young men spent for cigars. He was full of moral maxims for boys. When he came to our house on business, he quoted "Poor Richard's Almanack" to me, and told me he was delighted to find a town boy who could milk a cow. He was particularly affable to grandmother, and whenever they met he would begin at once to talk about "the good old times" and simple living. I detested his pink, bald head, and his yellow whiskers, always soft and glistening. It was said he brushed them every night, as a woman does her hair. His white teeth looked factory-made. His skin was red and rough, as if from perpetual sunburn; he often went away to hot springs to take mud baths. He was notoriously dissolute with women. . . . Cutter lived in a state of perpetual warfare with his wife, and yet, apparently, they never thought of separating. They dwelt in a fussy, scroll-work house, painted white and buried in thick evergreens, with a fussy white fence and barn. . . . He was so fastidious and prim about his place that a boy would go to a good deal of trouble to throw a dead cat into his back yard, or to dump a sackful of tin cans in his alley. It was a peculiar combination of old-maidishness and licentiousness that made Cutter seem so despicable.[25]

The gross embodiment of all the materialists who came to tear the vitality out of the original dream of the West, Cutter in his greed turns to irrationality and mania; his selfishness destroys many of his debtors, and ultimately destroys him as well.

Although *A Lost Lady* follows *One of Ours* in order of publication, it should be examined at this point because it is actually the culminating work in the sequence of frontier novels. *One of Ours,* set a full generation later, reveals not the processes of Western decay but what Miss Cather presents as the ultimate tragic consequences of an inevitable seriate degeneration. Thus, in *A Lost Lady* the complete development of the negativistic symbol takes place. All the other elements of the novel become subordinated to this one symbol; and the novel becomes the parable of the downfall of a frontier through the degenerating force of misdirected progress. An analysis of Willa Cather's concrete representations of venality makes it apparent that the theme of *A Lost Lady* is an integral part of the one great theme which runs through all of her novels relating to the frontier: the true pioneer spirit is subdued and falls before the encroachment of profligate materialism; because man has failed to maintain rapport with the gods he brought with him into the wilderness, he has lost his right to happiness. And yet the crass materialist is himself lost in the welter of progress. His abundant possessions are no assurance,

[25] *Ibid.,* 238-40.

Miss Cather emphasizes, of his right to earthly happiness. Again she voices the question that she asks in "Nebraska." Will the new generation "believe that to live easily is to live happily"?

In Ivy Peters, a second-generation pioneer, Miss Cather symbolically concentrates the cause of the decline of the true West. He is a compound of all the aggressive yet enervating forces that drain the spirit of the frontier. He is a deliberate sinner against nature and against man. The wanton mutilation of the woodpecker presages the perverted and sadistic will that leads Ivy ultimately to the more significant evil of ruthless exploitation. The motiveless crime against an innocent animal is symptomatic of his overpowering self-assertiveness and perversity, characteristics that dominate all his future actions.[26] Paralleling the wanton destruction of animals by men in such classics as Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and Poe's *The Black Cat,* Ivy Peter's crime is directed not merely against a defenceless animal but against nature and God. This early act lends credibility to his later expressions of satanic pride. As a man capable of measuring right and wrong, he wilfully violates the philosophical and theological conception of creation. This he does—like Satan, and, to a lesser degree, like Adam and Eve—by making his personal whims and greed the sole motives of his actions. Desiring power, luxury, and complete fulfilment of his own convenience, he loses sight of all ideals, of all values that are not utilitarian. Miss Cather sees in him the incarnation of all the detestable ills of materialism, the violation of all the moral and aesthetic principles that brought greatness to the West. For he nullifies the primal idealism which sustained the pioneers; he fosters the ugly utility which reinforces his debilitating schemes. Ivy, knowing the consequences of his greed, proceeds regardless of any hurt that he may inflict on others. He is especially debased because he makes no creative contribution to the land; he is willing to despoil it and its people without even considering the virtue of abiding by an ideal.

The Old West had been settled by dreamers, great-hearted adventurers who were unpractical to the point of magnificence; a courteous brotherhood, strong in attack but weak in defence, who could conquer but could not hold. Now all the vast territory they had won was to be at the

[26]The incident is further significant in that it becomes a parable of the reaction of a free and living force—like the frontier—to the crassness and wanton cruelty of a humanity and philosophy symbolized by Ivy Peters. The woodpecker, free and secure, is suddenly attacked by Ivy Peters, and it becomes desperate in its confusion, aware only of the fact that it must retreat to its usual perch. So the frontier attacked by the sudden materialism of men like Ivy Peters becomes equally desperate in its confusion and like the bird knows only defensive retreat. *A Lost Lady* (New York, 1923), 24-5.

mercy of men like Ivy Peters, who had never dared anything, never risked anything. They would drink up the mirage, dispel the morning freshness, root out the great brooding spirit of freedom, the generous, easy life of the great land-holders. The space, the colour, the princely carelessness of the pioneer they would destroy and cut up into profitable bits, as the match factory splinters the primeval forest. All the way from the Missouri to the mountains this generation of shrewd young men, trained to petty economies by hard times, would do exactly what Ivy Peters had done when he drained the Forrester marsh.[27]

But Ivy Peters, and the idea that he represents, is not alone responsible for the decline of a frontier. His active, obvious evil requires a kind of unwitting support from those who have become either too weak or too indifferent to resist the desiccation of a lofty ideal. His exploitations gain an insidious effect from passivity even as they do from active acquiescence. In attacking the material defects of progress Miss Cather is attacking those active wrongs typified by the career of Ivy Peters. Simultaneously she is criticizing the causes of Western decay through the personification of two pioneer types. Captain Forrester is representative of a weakened morality which precludes his defence of that which he recognizes as just. At the same time Marian Forrester is a portrayal of inertness, or even of amorality, that simply prevents her from identifying right and wrong and from choosing between them. Their combined attributes, therefore, serve as foils to the unqualified evil of Ivy Peters.

Captain Forrester, the pathetic dreamer of the true West, is essentially of the pioneer caste. He saw the beginnings, thrived and matured therein, and then fell before a cankerous materialism. His physical deterioration is a metaphorical extension of the decline of the frontier before the inroads of opportunism. Miss Cather patterned his growing debility after the fading resistance that destroyed many of the pioneers of the Captain's generation, those who were drawn under by materialism. "Once last winter he had been drinking with some old friends at the Antlers,—nothing unusual, just as he always did, as a man must be able to do,—but it was too much for him. When he came out to join me in the carriage, coming down that long walk, you know, he fell. There was no ice, he didn't slip. It was simply because he was unsteady. He had trouble getting up. I still shiver to think of it. To me, it was as if one of the mountains had

[27] *Ibid.*, 106-7. To Niel, who is Miss Cather's spokesman in the novel, the Forrester marsh is surrounded by "an almost religious purity"; indeed, it becomes "a gift handed down from the heroic ages" (pp. 84-5). Moreover, Miss Cather, unwilling to have the incident misunderstood, herself editorializes and indicates that the draining of the marsh is the moral and aesthetic hostility of the new order to the old (pp. 105-6). A factual parallel of her idyllic concept of the Forrester marsh appears in "Nebraska," 144-5.

fallen down."[28] He is rescued from complete pathos, because, despite his waning strength—the reflection of the waning strength of the West—the Captain has retained his integrity. In at least one instance, as the only director of the failing bank who restores the depositors' funds, Captain Forrester stubbornly clings to the ideals of generosity and nobility that were the real glory of the Western dream. He is guilty of being weak not sinful, and he invites our compassion. As a frustrated pioneer he lives to see the result of his own weakness. His death elicits from Miss Cather the obvious symbolical comparison of the arrival of winter. After the funeral: "The grey day was darkening, and as the three sat having their tea in the bay-window, swift squalls of snow were falling over the wide meadows between the hills and the town, and the creaking of the big cottonwoods about the house seemed to say that winter had come."[29] An era had passed and the philistines had come to rule the land. Surely it is as Niel reflects:

> He had seen the end of an era, the sunset of the pioneer. He had come upon it when already its glory was nearly spent. So in the buffalo times a traveller used to come upon the embers of a hunter's fire on the prairie, after the hunter was up and gone; the coals would be trampled out, but the ground was warm, and the flattened grass where he had slept and where his pony had grazed, told the story.
>
> This was the very end of the road-making West; the men who had put plains and mountains under the iron harness were old; some were poor, and even the successful ones were hunting for rest and a brief reprieve from death. It was already gone that age; nothing could ever bring it back. The taste and smell and song of it, the visions those men had seen in the air and followed,—these he had caught in a kind of after-glow in their own faces,—and this would always be his.[30]

Marian Forrester, the captain's wife, is the central figure of *A Lost Lady,* the tragic heroine whose passivity places her at the core of a great transitional crisis. Like the frontier itself, Marian Forrester is receptive to the influence of the new materialistic order. Subject at the same time to the dying spiritual traditions of the frontier, she is incapable of active selection between the good traditions that are falling behind her and the bad traditions that are forming before her. Thoroughly pliable under the experience of each day and bending to each aggressive idea, she at first waxes with the brightness of a joyous pioneer spirit. When she is possessed by the Captain, the best (and the worst) in the pioneer ideal, Mrs. Forrester assumes all the characteristics of the pioneer. In so doing she reveals to the fullest her graciousness, strength, and vitality. When the pioneer spirit with-

[28] *A Lost Lady,* 41. [29] *Ibid.,* 146. [30] *Ibid.,* 168.

draws before the inevitable encroachment, when the brightness of idealism changes to the darkness of materialism, Marian Forrester's spontaneity persists outwardly; but inwardly she, like the frontier, darkens, becomes a penumbral figure. She is truly a product of the times.

There lies the tragedy of Mrs. Forrester. She is not tragic because she fails to observe the usual codes of social propriety. Rather, she is tragic because she drifts away from the felicitous principle of the pioneer and is absorbed into the new evil order promulgated by men like Ivy Peters, because she outrages "an aesthetic idea," not "a moral scruple."[31] "It was what [Niel] most held against Mrs. Forrester; that she was not willing to immolate herself, like the widow of all these great men, and die with the pioneer period to which she belonged; that she preferred life on any terms."[32] Without the guidance of a pioneer spirit she must arrive at the disaster of materialism.

> It was Mrs. Forrester herself who had changed. Since her husband's death she seemed to have become another woman. For years Niel and his uncle, the Dalzells and all their friends, had thought of the Captain as a drag upon his wife; a care that drained her and dimmed her and kept her from being all that she might be. But without him, she was like a ship without ballast, driven hither and thither by every wind. She was flighty and perverse. She seemed to have lost her faculty of discrimination; her power of easily and graciously keeping everyone in his proper place.[33]

Thus, Mrs. Forrester's failure to choose typifies for Miss Cather the tragedy of passivity of all those pioneers who submitted to materialism and its values. Mrs. Forrester's surrender to Ivy Peters is but a physical manifestation of her final dissolution. Because the materiality of civilization is a destroying force for Willa Cather, Mrs. Forrester is destroyed, mourned only by those last few functionless idealists, the Western pioneers. So Niel Herbert "would like to call up the shade of the young Mrs. Forrester, as the witch of Endor called up Samuel's, and challenge it, demand the secret of that ardour; ask her whether she had really found some ever-blooming, ever-burning, ever-piercing joy, or whether it was all fine play-acting. Probably she had found no more than another; but she had always the power of suggesting things much lovelier than herself, as the perfume of a single flower may call up the whole sweetness of spring."[34]

As a virtual aftermath of pioneer idealization, the equation of exploitation and an enervating, consuming decadence emerges again in *One of Ours*. Here the near-omnipotence of "machine-made materialism" is passively questioned and opposed by the hero Claude

[31] *Ibid.*, 87. [32] *Ibid.*, 169. [33] *Ibid.*, 152-3. [34] *Ibid.*, 171-2.

Wheeler. Significantly a reflection of departed high-minded idealism, he is a tragic reminder of the implacable consequences of materialism. Miss Cather has made him an unfortunate anachronism who cannot contend with the materialism of the present. Reared in a tradition of aggressiveness, he romantically senses his maladjustment. Unlike the true pioneers, he lacks the strength of purpose that will bring him to fight constructively for an ideal that he himself does not understand. A wistful, attenuated romantic, he has but two courses to follow. The first is to subordinate himself to the materialism of his age, like so many weak pioneers before him. This he does with disastrous personal results. The second is to flee, not toward an ideal but away from repugnant standards, again like many unsuccessful pioneers. This too he does and dies, an escapist striving for an ideal which, paradoxically, he discovers in the destructive environment of war.

He accepted the violent transition to war because of his hopeless recognition that the evils of the now-established order could bring him only frustration, because of his realization that "no battlefield or shattered country" would ever be "as ugly as this world would be if men like his brother Bayliss controlled it altogether."[35] The ugliness wrought by men like Bayliss caused Claude to envision in farming a symbol of modern futility.

> The farmer raised and took to market things with an intrinsic value; wheat and corn as good as could be grown anywhere in the world, hogs and cattle that were the best of their kind. In return he got manufactured articles of poor quality; showy furniture that went to pieces, carpets and draperies that faded, clothes that made a handsome man look like a clown. Most of his money was paid out for machinery,—and that, too, went to pieces. A steam thrasher didn't last long; a horse outlived three automobiles.
>
> Claude felt sure that when he was a little boy and all the neighbors were poor, they and their houses and farms had more individuality. The farmers took time then to plant fine cotton-wood groves on their places, and to set osage orange hedges along the borders of their fields. Now these trees were all being cut down and grubbed up. Just why, nobody knew; they impoverished the land . . . they made the snow drift. . . . With prosperity came a kind of callousness; everybody wanted to destroy the old things they used to take pride in. The orchards, which had been nursed and tended so carefully twenty years ago, were now left to die of neglect. It was less trouble to run into town in an automobile and buy fruit than it was to raise it.
>
> The people themselves had changed. He could remember when all the farmers in this community were friendly toward each other; now they were continually having lawsuits. Their sons were either stingy and

[35] *One of Ours*, 419. Bayliss Wheeler is the last in a line of second-generation pioneers, a line which began with Oscar and Lou Bergson.

grasping, or extravagant and lazy, and they were always stirring up trouble. Evidently, it took more intelligence to spend money than to make it.[36]

Moreover, Claude was unable to adjust himself to what he considered the economic pattern of America, "where people were always buying and selling, building and pulling down." He assessed the need for quietude and a recognition of traditional values that were ignored in favour of material progress. "Life was so short that it meant nothing at all unless it were continually reinforced by something that endured; unless the shadows of individual existence came and went against a background that held together."[37]

Throughout her novels, Miss Cather has memorialized her constantly hopeful yet realistic philosophy. More than fiction, her books are a determinate extension of her intellectual being, giving artistic force to her observations of mankind, its successes, its shortcomings. A serious, highly articulate artist, Miss Cather is perhaps too exacting of society, morally and aesthetically. Certainly she lost patience with the growing materialism of her own generation and of the generation that followed. Yet her criticism is profound if not attuned to the times. In a statement that may be applied with admirable pertinence to the writings of Miss Cather, Lionel Trilling recently identified the deeply sincere purpose that typifies great works of fiction: "The novel, then, is a perpetual quest for reality, the field of its research being always the social world, the material of its analysis being always manners as the indication of the direction of man's soul."[38] Ever the analyst of manners, Willa Cather refuses to believe in any material compulsion so great that it can permanently thwart man's ideals and with it his potential happiness.

[36]*Ibid.*, 101-2. [37]*Ibid.*, 406.
[38]"Manners, Morals, and the Novel," *Kenyon Review*, Winter, 1948, 23.

THREE MAYAN CLASSICS

T. B. Irving

THE Mayas of Yucatan and Guatemala form the native American group which has left the most extensive records of its literature and history. For almost two thousand years, their area of influence extended over most of Yucatan, Chiapas, and Guatemala, and parts of Honduras and Salvador. Thus these documents have a real value in reconstructing the life of an important cultural region of the world.

This literature conveys to us the story of creation and of subsequent history, known and honoured by the Mayas and carried by them through centuries of glory and over miles of terrain. It is the most original collection of tales completed in America before the arrival of Columbus; indeed, it rises from the realm of folklore into that of philosophy and world literature, and rewards us with the latent eloquence of its mood of myth. Great ravines with distant mountains gird the ancient Quiché kingdom, so that the whole region lends itself to poetry, and we might consider it the classical land of America.

The most important Mayan stock in the Guatemalan Highlands was and still is the Quiché nation. Their ruling caste were Toltecs who arrived from Mexico in the eleventh century, and were connected with the similar invasion of Yucatan. From what we can gather, this Guatemalan branch went to Yucatan first on their way from Mexico, and then returned across the marshes by the Laguna de Terminos in the modern state of Tabasco. Nacshit, the king from whom the early Quiché kings received their investiture, was either the mythical Toltec leader Quetzalcoatl-Kukulcán, or more probably one of his descendants.[1] These Quiché rulers reigned in pairs, as in Sparta, and when the earliest leaders got tired of pioneering, they died and were transfigured like the patriarchs of the Old Testament or the Roman heroes.

Their records offer us a good picture of how Guatemala was first settled: land was cleared and towns rose up as roads spread out, just as on our own frontiers in North America. The Quichés' first cities were built on hilltops for the purpose of defence against the original inhabitants of the country. Cakyug in the play *Rabinal-Achí* was one of these fortresses.

Pedro de Alvarado, or Tonatiuh as the Mexicans called him, conquered the Quiché capital of Gumarcaah with its twenty-four

[1]See Recinos, *Popol Vuh*, 72-3, 254. At the end of this article will be found a bibliography listing the Mayan works discussed.

palaces "well built and marvellously strong" on April 4, 1524. The reigning kings were burnt at the stake, and the nobles who were left fled to Chuvilá, or Chichicastenango as it is called in Mexican, about fifteen miles to the south. They took their lore with them, guarding it carefully for many decades. In other parts of the Mayan world, their glory likewise remained hidden, awaiting a more sympathetic era.

I

The most important document we possess is the *Popol-Vuh* or the "Book of the Council," so named after the *pop* or ceremonial mat on which the council sat.[2] The *Popol-Vuh* was preserved in Chichicastenango after the last Quiché princes fled from the burning of their capital and kings. Francisco Ximénez, a Dominican priest who knew the native languages, served as curate of Chichicastenango in 1701 and 1702. He won his parishioners' esteem, and was presented with a manuscript of this work, which he published in the Quiché original and a Spanish translation in his *History of Chiapas and Guatemala*. Ximénez also spent ten years in Rabinal, from which our third masterpiece comes, although he does not seem to have learned of its existence.

Carl Scherzer, an Austrian student of American history, visited Central America in 1853 and 1854, and published the first European version of the *Popol-Vuh* in 1857. Unfortunately, his copyist in Guatemala had been careless, and his typesetter in Vienna was little better. A French student of Quiché, Father Charles-Etienne Brasseur de Bourbourg, arrived in Guatemala the year Scherzer left. He was able to secure the original of the *Popol-Vuh* from the University of San Carlos library, by means which are somewhat mysterious. Brasseur prepared an edition which appeared in 1861 in Paris, and it evoked much interest in scientific circles abroad. He also secured the *Memorial of Sololá* and *Rabinal-Achí,* which we shall discuss later.

Internal evidence shows that the *Popol-Vuh* was probably written down between the years 1554 and 1558[3] as the transcriber remembered the stories being told around his home, and just as Garcilaso de la Vega recorded Incan lore from his household in Peru. Perhaps it was based on one of the colourful Mayan picture codices, and what we have is a running commentary on the drawings.

The first part of the *Popol-Vuh* consists chiefly of myths, and begins with the majestic picture offered by the act of creation:

[2]Cf. the "woolsack" for the English Lord Chancellor.
[3]See Recinos, *Popol Vuh,* 31.

This is the story of our genesis,
The time when everything was calm and silent,
All was motionless, all quiet,
And empty was the vastness of the heavens.
Here then is the first word
And the first speech.
There were still no men or animals;
There were no birds, no fish, no crabs,
No woods, no grass, no flowers,
No storms, ravines or gorges.
Only the heavens existed:
The face of earth had not appeared;
Merely the calm and boundless sea
Stretched forth under heaven's vault.
Nothing stood erect;
In the stillness of unending night
Nothing at all existed!
There was only the hush of darkness.[4]

The second part consists of chronicles told in a vein similar to the historical sections of the Old Testament. The whole is full of stories which parallel Genesis or the Greek myths, though with a few improvements such as the three attempts of the gods to form man, from clay, from wood, and finally from corn.

This mythology is recounted in an elevated style, and all who have read it commend its beautiful imagery and dignified philosophy. For instance, the concept that the first men had their eyes beclouded so they could not know everything is more striking and harmonious than the legend of Eve's apple. We hear beautiful names like Heart of Earth and Heart of Heaven: the latter is the name of the wind god *Hurakán* or Hurricane, who spins like a giant heart in the sky; and his Quiché name has passed through the Spanish into most European tongues as the word for a violent windstorm.

The tales display great narrative art and delightful humour. The 400 boys tug away at their log to build their house, until Zipacná comes along to carry it for them like Paul Bunyan. Later they are very lively as they lean over the edge of their big hole, shouting down to guide the giant's digging. How clever and shrewd is the latter! When he pushes the roof down on the boys' heads while they are drinking at their housewarming, he escapes—as Samson did not. Zipacná's brother Cabracane[5] goes stamping over the earth to cause earthquakes, and is magnificent when he waters at the mouth in expectation of the twins' roast bird.

[4]This and other quotations are my own versions.

[5]Cabracane means "he with two feet" (i.e., to stamp the earthquakes); Hurricane is "he with one foot," symbolic of the wind spinning in the sky. I have made both names rhyme as they do in the original.

The guffaw from the Lords of the land of Shibalbá re-echoes at the first twins' discomfort as they sit writhing on the hot bench; and we crouch along with Hun-Hunahpu and Vucub-Hunahpu as the lighted brand is brought to them in the House of Darkness, and almost see their eyes shining in the flickering flame. With all their superiority, the Mayan Plutos, Hun-Camé and Vucub-Camé, are curious as to what is happening up on earth; and they are joyous enough to whistle when the bonfires consume their foes. We discover the innate politeness of the Guatemalan today as these twins greet their mortal enemies, even though the latter will use their greeting as a pretext for killing them. *Rabinal-Achí* is replete with similar courtesy in the face of death. When the four brothers stroll through the woods, they shoot at the birds with real boys' envy of each other. How Hurricane must have appeared hovering over the House of the Bats! We can also share the joy of the dog, so happy to be alive again after being sacrificed.

But most of all, we are charmed by Ish-Quic's nobility as she substitutes resinous *pom* for her own heart, just as Abraham sacrificed a ram instead of Isaac. She is a simple, good girl, so pure in heart that the animals carry her corn for her, just as pregnant girls are helped in any land. The animals hurry too with the message for the old grandmother, Ish-Mucané, who has become fond of her new grandsons, and feels real concern for the dangers they will face in Shibalbá where their fathers died before them; the twins have to trick this matriarch into fetching water, so she will not see them getting the ball from the rooftop.

II

Unfortunately, the latter and more historical half of the *Popol-Vuh* is not nearly so well composed as the first, and abounds in those begettings which can make Bible reading such a chore. However, the *Memorial of Sololá* or the *Annals of the Cakchiquels,* which recounts the parallel history of the rival Cakchiquel nation, contains a reverse situation: it is confused in the beginning, but quite clear towards the end.

The *Memorial* confirms much data reported in the Quiché work, and seems to be fairly impartial despite the national rivalries, as for instance, when the author admires King Quicab, against whom his own people revolted. The *Annals* report of the Spanish conquest is splendid: Alvarado's entry into the Cakchiquel capital of Ishimché is a graphic, eye-witness account, especially in its subtle description

of the state of the conqueror's heart, leaving the reader to judge how cruel the Spaniard was in reality:

> Then Tonatiuh [i.e., Alvarado] began to ask the kings for metal. He wanted them to give him whole pots full of precious metal, and even their cups and personal jewelry. . . . Tonatiuh tore the metal ornaments right out of three nobles' ears. The nobles suffered keenly at this brutality, but Tonatiuh was not bothered, and merely said to them:
>
> "I tell you I want the metal here within five days. Woe on you if you don't give me it! I know my heart."[6]

The *Annals* were started by Francisco Hernández Arana Shahilá, a descendant of the royal house of the Cakchiquels, shortly after the conquest, and continued by Francisco Díaz Gebutá Queh until the first part of the seventeenth century. They contain an intensely personal note, as if the authors were recording information for their children: "At that time my son Diego Pablo Cotanoh was born. You were born, O my son, on the day 6 Tzii!" The result clearly shows that both Quichés and Cakchiquels produced men of letters.

III

Our other major work, *Rabinal-Achí,* was not written down until the middle of the past century. It had been preserved orally at the town of Rabinal in Lower Verapaz, ever since the period of rivalry with the Highland Quichés six centuries before. In the year 1855, Bartolo Ziz dictated the play to Father Brasseur de Bourbourg, who had taken charge of Rabinal parish in order to learn the Quiché language. The French scholar underwrote a new performance of the tragedy, for *Rabinal-Achí* had not been staged for several decades prior to his arrival owing to the great cost of costumes and scenery, as well as the Spanish clergy's objections to its pagan theme. Brasseur published the play as Ziz had dictated it to him, together with a French translation.

The Aztecs and Incas reportedly possessed a theatre, but *Rabinal-Achí* is the only drama which has been salvaged from the Spanish conquest of America. Our play had a ritual origin, as did the drama in many other civilizations; it is indeed a pagan tragedy, especially in the final scene of sacrifice. Throughout it displays those elements of nobility that make up the true classic. The finest scene is where Quiché-Achí asks permission to dance with Princess Tzam-Kam-Carchag "whose lips are virgin and whose eyes have never yet been

[6]Recinos (*Memorial,* 128, n. 234) translates this passage differently, and does not charge Alvarado with physical brutality.

kissed," and then bids farewell to his mountains and valleys, to return promptly and be sacrificed.

The chief protagonist, Quiché-Achí or the Prince of Quiché, has been the terror of Rabinal in the low country, and after he has kidnapped old King Hobtoh, the latter's son, Rabinal-Achí or the Prince of Rabinal, swears to stop his depredations. The action starts when the Highland leader is taken prisoner, and it continues until the captive has his heart torn out on the sacrificial altar. The whole mood is underlain with the throb of the sacred drum which beats more and more strongly up to the tenseness of the final scene; in fact, a subtitle of the work is "Ballet of the Drum."

The first act is important because it gives the previous events in a series of verbal flashbacks, and thus would lead to a modern reconstruction of the drama. However, the action moves most swiftly in the culminating act, when the Prince of Quiché drinks King Hobtoh's liquor, wears his best fabrics, dances first with the princess and then with the Eagle and Jaguar knights of Rabinal, and finally bids farewell to his beloved hills and valleys. His last speech is particularly moving:

I have traced my path from Earth to Heaven through tall grass and pushing branches aside as I went through the forest, yet my bravery and valour have been no use to me! Alas! May Heaven and Earth hear me! Must I really die, must I meet my end here?

O my gold and silver, my bow and shield, my Toltec mace, my Yaqui axe! You are all that will remain of me! Even my sandals will be left! Return to our mountains and valleys and bear my tidings to our lord and master. For here is what our lord and master will be saying by now:

"It is far too long since my valour and courage went hunting the game we like to see upon our table."

Our lord and master will be saying that, but he will never guess that I am only awaiting my doom here between Heaven and Earth. Alas! May Heaven help me, and Earth hear me! If I must die here, oh let me change places with that squirrel or with that bird! They die upon the branches or on the tender grass where they find all their needs.

I therefore turn to you, O Eagles and Jaguars; come, carry out your mission. However, fulfil your duty in such a fashion that your fangs and claws pause but an instant in slaying me; for I am brave and have proven it already by coming all this way from my mountains and valleys. Thus, may Heaven and Earth be with you, O Eagles and Jaguars!

In recent years, a modernized version called *Quiché-Achí* has been successfully staged in Guatemala by Carlos Giron-Cerna. It would be interesting to make a similar experiment in English.

IV

These texts exist in various original and translated versions. Their chief difficulty for the modern reader lies in their over-rich style; indeed no readable version exists in any language, though all pieces merit being made available as literature instead of being preserved as ethnographic curiosities. An anthology might be compiled by eliminating over-pompous diction and weaving the various strands into connected narrative. Many gods who hold up the action could be suppressed, for the *Popol-Vuh* itself tells us that deities without worshippers are but demigods; better remove them at one stroke, to stop their agony! Yet the nature of the stories makes such an attempt seem rather irreverent.

The ethnologist will find the description of society among the Mayas quite vivid and in some cases contemporary. The houses are like those we see in the Central American countryside today, with the same open framework where the boys could watch the rat climbing up to untie their ball. The *zompopos,* those leaf-cutting ants, scurry about the House of the Knives, trimming the flowers as they still plague gardeners in Central America. Shibalbá could not have been situated entirely underground either, for it had lawns where spectators could gather, and houses that burned down. In fact, it was most probably associated with the land of the Itzás to the north of Verapaz.

We also find an underlying philosophy, the eternal struggle between good and evil, light and dark, modesty and pride. The lonely gods create a perfect man, so that they will be worshipped, and then they impair his vision so he will not know everything. Tohil, the American Prometheus, takes pity on the poor Quichés when the bitter frost of their mountain tops numbs their hands. The gods desire men's blood more than any gift, and prayer and fasting are the price of power and happiness. Finally, what does death mean? Hunahpu's skull was the same as that of any prince or mere mortal: dead bones scare the living, while a child is but a drop of spittle at conception. The mood of wisdom increases till we too yearn for the dawn which is always promised, and is so slow to appear.

Yet Mayan ethics were not entirely our own. The twins expect the women to wait on them in everything, and by our standards they are somewhat disrespectful towards them. The Lords of Shibalbá and the Cakchiquels were not really beaten: even Hurricane and the animals had to pitch in and help turn the tide that was running

against the twins, while Hunahpu's new head did not permit him to risk it playing ball. These people look for the saving miracle, as when they fought with wasps; although we can smile at the vanity of their enemies as they parade in the magic cloaks, and we can also find a totemic significance in these victories.

A short bibliography is appended for those interested in further study of this field; this list is by no means complete, but merely mentions the editions which are available or indispensable. More serious students are advised to consult Recinos, Goubaud-Carrera, and Morley's *Ancient Maya* for complete information in the field.

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BRITISH TRADE UNIONISM IN THE MID-VICTORIAN ERA

IRVING GARBATI

BRITISH trade unions, comprising now almost eight million members,[1] are the most important single element in the Labour party. Out of its total membership of 5,422,437 in 1948, 4,751,030 members were furnished by the trade unions.[2] The Labour party, it must be remembered furthermore, derives its original authority from the Trades Union Congress, when in 1899 it authorized the establishment of the Labour Representation Committee,[3] which became the Labour party in 1906. The trade unions thus not only officially support one political party but are committed to a programme envisaging the ultimate establishment of socialism in Great Britain.

The present-day trade unionist accepts these facts as a matter of course. But to the trade union leaders of the seventies and eighties they would appear to be the rankest unorthodoxy. There is in some vital respects a wide gulf indeed between the ideology or philosophy of the trade unionist in our era and that of his grandfather. But while these differences are striking, equally striking are the similarities. The present, after all, stems from the past. Indeed, there is a consistent strain in the character of British trade unionism which we should understand if we wish to understand present-day labour politics. It would therefore be eminently worth our while to examine the characteristics of British trade unionism in the era which nourished them. While this article does not claim to develop an original viewpoint on the history of British trade unionism, a history which has been definitively written by the Webbs,[4] it is based on primary sources and brings together the leading strands in British trade unionism of the mid-Victorian era.

The continuous line of development of modern British trade unionism may properly be said to begin in the middle of the last century. The "new model" unions then established, such as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Amalgamated Association of Carpenters and Joiners, the Amalgamated Association of Boot and Shoe Finishers, and others, put a permanent stamp upon British labour unions. The term "new model," used to distinguish the large centralized

[1]For this figure and other recent information concerning British trade unions see the interesting study by N. Barou, *British Trade Unions* (London, 1947).

[2]Labour Party, *Report of the 48th Annual Conference* (London, 1949), 35.

[3]Trades Union Congress, *Annual Report* (London, 1899), 64-6.

[4]Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (London, 1894). A second edition was published in 1911, but the text was left unchanged, the Webbs contenting themselves with the addition of a long introduction. Another edition was published in 1920, which brought the *History* up to date.

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unions from the localized, sporadic, petty unions that grew up in the first part of the century, gave expression to the sharp break which labour at this time was making with its past.

Ideologically speaking, these new unions were also a reaction to two other phenomena in the labour world dominant in the previous period. One was the Grand National Consolidated Union of 1833-4, conceived by Robert Owen to realize his dreams of a new society. The other was Chartism, a synthesis of diverse forces and purposes, which aimed at a reconstruction of society by political means. Both were manifestations of the struggles of a class bewildered by the immense changes fashioned by the growth of industry and deeply dissatisfied with things as they were, turning first to one and then to another method to achieve some equilibrium in a rapidly changing social order. "Bitter discontent grown fierce and mad" is the eloquent dictum pronounced by Thomas Carlyle in 1850 on Chartism.[5] Both movements collapsed after arousing an enormous amount of enthusiasm and left labour limp and disappointed. Fifty more years were to pass before it again turned to large schemes of social reconstruction. In the meantime the unionism of the fifties and sixties was an ideological reaction against political and social utopianism.

It is perhaps superfluous to point out that the "new model" unions and the new spirit animating them were a result of the changed conditions in Great Britain in the middle of the century, as the trade unionism of the earlier period was a result of conditions existing a quarter of a century earlier. In the earlier period the spirit of British labour was moulded by the turbulent and lean times consequent partly upon the Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath, partly upon the vigorous growth of industrialization and the inability of the labouring masses to accommodate themselves to this situation. In the latter half of the century, on the other hand, the spirit of labour was formed and influenced by the diffusion of prosperity, the position of Great Britain as the workshop of the world, the broadening of democracy "from precedent to precedent," the increasing willingness of the governing classes to protect at least the weaker portions of labour, the abolition of repressive legislation, and the emergence of a new group of labour leaders.[6] The building of peaceful, "safe," "respectable" trade unions occupied the energies of British workers in the later period, and British labour rapidly lost its violent and rebellious characteristics.

[5] *Chartism* (New York, 1885), 6.

[6] For an interesting summary of the changed conditions of labour in this period see J. M. Ludlow and Lloyd Jones, *The Progress of the Working Class 1832-1867* (London, 1867).

Corroboration of this change comes to us from opposite sources. Thus, a large employer of labour compliments the British workers in the following words: "The British were the most practical workmen he ever met with. Talk to a French workman who wanted to improve his position, and he replied about the reconstruction of society—that property was robbery, that he wanted a complete reorganization of the social system. The German was in favour of national labour. The Englishmen want to work practically, and established [*sic*] cooperative stores."[7]

From the opposite pole we receive similar testimony. On January 4, 1851, in an article called "The War of Classes" in the *Friend of the People,* a Chartist organ edited by G. Julian Harney, a firebrand "physical force" Chartist who preached the class struggle long before Marxism became a dominant creed among Continental working men, the changing spirit of British labour is strongly deplored. "It is true," he declares, in a tone suggesting that he wishes things were different, "that no *Jacquerie* desolates our fields; that no death-struggle between lord and serfs gives, in turn, the cattle and the cottage to the flames. It is true that the [*sic*] capital is not menaced by infuriated masses, driven to despair, and thirsting for vengeance; that neither a Tyler nor a Cade exist at this moment to dispute the sovereignty of the State with the appointed chief of the privileged classes. It is true that neither barricades nor bombardments brought the horrors of civil strife into our streets in 1848-9." Though all this is true, the writer expresses his conviction that these are merely superficial and temporary appearances and that a "war of classes" is going on nevertheless which is bound "ere long" to produce the "most important results."

In the same publication only a few weeks later, on January 25, 1851, the author of an article entitled "Social and Political Reform" notes that the present time is devoted to "industrial and social" questions, as distinguished from political reform (by political reform the author, of course, means a complete transformation of society on Chartist principles). It is interesting to observe, by the way, that the revolutionary Chartists, like the doctrinaire Social Democratic Federation a generation later, were at this early period criticizing the trade unions for their lack of interest in political questions and condemning them as useless since they are "from their very nature impotent to effect any general social change for the advantage of the wealth producers."

[7]Speech by Mr. Mundella in the House of Commons, *Parliamentary Debates,* 3rd series, CXCVII, July 7, 1869, 1378.

The public generally, while not yet accepting trade unionism with any marked degree of warmth, also recognized the new spirit exhibited by the labouring classes. Thus, the chairman of a parliamentary committee to investigate relations between employers and employed admits the change in the following question he put to a trade union leader: "Fifteen or twenty years ago they [the trade unions] were regarded almost in the light of revolutionary associations?" The answer given was, "They had then a political character which they have not now."[8] The view expressed by Dr. Arnold in 1834 that the trade union was a "fearful engine of mischief, ready to riot or to assassinate" was now no longer generally entertained.[9]

In public speeches, in newspapers and magazines, in testimony before official bodies the trade union leaders with becoming zeal explained that the interests of labour were not antagonistic to those of capital. In the words of one of the spokesmen of the trade union movement the "true position of employer and employed is that of amity. They are each, not withstanding these occasional disagreements, the truest friends of the other, and neither can inflict an injury on the other without its recoiling on himself. Capital and labour should go hand in hand."[10] And as early as 1845, in words which sound remarkably similar to those in the passage just quoted, a conference of trade unions declared: "The Committee was deeply impressed with the importance of, and beneficial tendency arising from, a good understanding between the employer and the employed; seeing that their interests are mutual and that neither can injure the other without the wrong perpetrated recoiling upon the party who inflicts it. They would therefore suggest it to be one of the principal objects of this Conference to cultivate a good understanding with the employer. . . ."[11]

Steeped in such a philosophy it was only natural that labour should eschew independent political action and use the vote granted to it in 1867 by the Second Reform Act not to effect a major transformation of society but merely to exert pressure upon the legislature to grant it concessions. The fears expressed by some on the eve of the Reform Act that labour might use its force to "fly at the restraints of society, and attempt to tear them down as unjust," to assert that the demands "of the capitalist are unrighteous, and wages are a

[8]Testimony of William Newton, of the Engineers Union, before the Select Committee on Masters and Operatives, *Report and Proceedings* (1856), XIII, c. 343, 138.

[9]From a letter by Dr. Arnold to the Chevalier Bunser, quoted by Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians* (New York and London, 1925), 224.

[10]T. J. Dunning, *Trades' Unions and Strikes* (London, 1860), 26.

[11]Quoted by the Webbs, 188-9.

robbery of the working-man,"[12] in short, to use the trade unions for the purpose of launching its votes "in one compact mass *upon the institutions and property of the country,*"[13] proved to be completely wrong, or at any rate premature.

Unlike labour on the Continent, which turned to independent political action and built up powerful socialist parties, labour in Great Britain was content, on the whole, to support the Liberal party. Many union leaders were pillars of that party and used their influential position among the labouring classes to campaign for Liberal candidates. A good example may be found in one of the most prominent trade union leaders of the eighties, for many years the secretary of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, Henry Broadhurst, who describes the role which he fulfilled in the Liberal party in his autobiography.[14]

Here we may note important exceptions. George Odger, the revered and stalwart labour leader of the sixties, general secretary of the Boot and Shoe Makers Union, a member of the Junta (the five-man "cabinet" of the trade union world before there was a Trades Union Congress) was one of the few who advocated that labour elect its own candidates to Parliament.[15]

But this exception is more apparent than real. It is doubtful whether even George Odger, a most advanced labour leader in those days, a man active in the affairs of the First International, was thinking in terms of an independent political movement of labour; certainly he did not envisage a separate and distinct labour party in Parliament. Those who stood for labour representation merely believed that the group interest of labour should be represented in the House of Commons by working men in the same way that the brewing, shipping, manufacturing, and other interests were represented by brewers, shippers, and manufacturers.

In the same light must be understood the "hardy perennials," as one trade union leader sardonically termed the resolutions on labour representation which the Trades Union Congress adopted annually, beginning with the second Congress in 1869 held in Birming-

[12]"The Extension of the Franchise," by an "ex-M.P." in *Contemporary Review*, Nov., 1866, 438.

[13]From a speech by Robert Lowe (later Lord Shelbrooke), quoted in Ludlow and Jones, *Progress of the Working Class*, 209; italics in original.

[14]*Henry Broadhurst, M.P.* (London, 1909).

[15]"The Working Man in Parliament," by George Odger, in *Contemporary Review*, Dec., 1870, 102-23. For a summary of Odger's ideas and activities see the article by W. H. G. Armytage, "George Odger (1820-1877), a Founder of the British Labour Movement," in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, XVIII, Oct., 1948, 68-75.

ham.[16] These resolutions in later years were adopted with little debate and with less enthusiasm and merely expressed the pious hope of the Congress that trade unions would "take every opportunity of returning to parliament men of their own order."[17] Congress had no intention of establishing a separate labour party or even a group of members of Parliament independent of the Liberal party. Furthermore, it should be remarked, the adoption of these resolutions did not bind anyone and the unions therefore did not take them seriously. The Parliamentary Committee had neither the power nor the desire to enforce the carrying out of resolutions and the majority of trade unions continued to support the regular candidates of the Liberal party. So loath was Congress to implement its resolutions in a practical manner that when T. R. Threlfall of Southport, one of the more politically minded trade unionists, in 1884 proposed to empower the Parliamentary Committee "to form a fund and appeal for funds" for the election and maintenance of labour members, he was overwhelmingly defeated.[18] And when two years later, under the impact of a wave of strikes and socialist agitation, in a period of prolonged depression, an Electoral Labour Committee was established upon a motion of this same Threlfall,[19] it was little supported by the trade unions and simply became an appendage of the Liberal party.[20]

The one substantial exception to this story of unheeded resolutions and general apathy is furnished by the miners who in 1874 elected Alexander MacDonald and Thomas Burt to the House of Commons and thereafter continued to elect a contingent of their men to the national legislature. These labour representatives, however, were little feared by the upper classes, whose attitude may be summed up by a cartoon in *Punch* during the elections of 1885. The cartoon shows the aristocracy watching these well-dressed and well-fed leaders of labour entering the House of Commons and saying: "Why, these people are just like ourselves."

Implicit in the avoidance of philosophies, theories, and doctrines is the increasingly peaceful character of the trade unions, the abandonment of violent methods, the reluctance to strike, the eagerness to resort to conciliation and arbitration. This aversion to striking natu-

[16]W. J. Davis, *The British Trades Union Congress, History and Recollections* (London, 1910), I, 8. Congress did not begin to publish its proceedings until 1873 and the above work therefore forms a useful summary of its early history.

[17]T.U.C. *Report* (1875), 19.

[18]T.U.C. *Report* (1884), 32.

[19]T.U.C. *Report* (1886), 35-7.

[20]A. W. Humphrey, *A History of Labour Representation* (London, 1912), 104.

rally became greater with the growth of the unions and the growth of a union bureaucracy increasingly removed from mill and factory. In their *History of Trade Unionism* the Webbs give a graphic description (pp. 469-71), unfortunately too long for quotation here, of the "insensible" transformation which took place in the outlook of a trade unionist as he successively became a leader in his local branch, left his job for a paid union position, gradually lost sympathy with his former fellows, and developed a middle-class view of life.

During his testimony before a royal commission to investigate trade unions in 1867 Robert Applegarth, another of the prominent trade union leaders of the sixties, a member of the Junta, and the general secretary of the Carpenters Union, was asked whether his executive committee was "in the habit of suggesting and counselling a strike." Applegarth answered without hesitation: "It never does so." And when he was further asked: "Is it the case that the executive for the most part does not sanction the applications to strike which it receives, or what proportion of them are refused?" he answered: "About one third, as near as I can recollect, of our applications during the past four years have been refused."[21] The general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, William Allan, gave similar testimony before the same commission. To the question, "What do you consider is the reason of the fact that you have had no strike of any consequence since 1852?" he answered: "The Executive Council and the members, generally speaking, are averse to strikes. They think that matters ought to be settled in a different way than coming to strikes or lock-out."[22] From still another union leader, when asked whether trade unions do not realize that a strike situation may develop, came this reply: "I think the tendency now is, to keep away from strikes as much as possible, and to win advances without them by memorialising, and by moral suasion. . . ."[23]

In a pamphlet designed to enlighten a still sceptical, if not hostile, public concerning trade unions, a union leader sums up the attitude to strikes and the reason behind the attitude in the following passage: "Strikes are always to be deprecated, because they are, for the time, a state of moral warfare, and, like all states of hostility, productive of mutual bitterness—and because they are carried on at a loss to both parties. . . ."[24]

[21]Commissioners appointed to inquire into organizations and rules of trade unions and other associations, *First Report and Proceedings* (1867), XXXII, c. 3873, 9. [22]*Ibid.*, 30.

[23]Select Committee on Master and Servant, *Report and Proceedings* (1866), XIII, c. 449, 90.

[24]Dunning, *Trades' Unions and Strikes*, 23.

It is quite in keeping with this outlook that the sliding scale, by which wages were regulated automatically in accordance with the market price of coal, should prevail in the coal industry during the seventies; or that a complicated list system, by which wages were fixed for various categories of workers in accordance with conditions obtaining in the trade, should prevail in the cotton industry during the same period.[25] And it is also in keeping with this outlook that many trade unions should favour conciliation and arbitration as a substitute for strife.[26]

If conciliation and arbitration did not pervade British industry to a far greater extent in this period it was not the fault of the trade unions. Tolerance and magnanimity may be a sign of strength, but when opposing sides have not yet learned to accommodate themselves to each other and to agree to mutual compromise, strength is far more often conducive to arrogance and inflexibility. The weaker party is always quite ready to rely upon the arbitration of disinterested persons; the stronger party is more likely to trust to his own power. In this early period of the growth of trade unions, when labour was still gathering its strength, the employers felt themselves to be in a relatively stronger position. Furthermore, conciliation or arbitration necessitates dealing with the trade union as a representative of the men, something which not all employers were at this time quite prepared to do. This is stated with admirable candour, if with superfluous rhetoric, in the following passage from a pamphlet on unionism by a contemporary publicist:

> Our main objection, . . . both to arbitration and conciliation, . . . is that they sanction, nay necessitate, the continuance of the system of combination, as opposed to that of individual competition. We regard them, therefore, as mischievous compromises with a principle essentially evil; as deceitful remedies, which palliate the symptoms, but confirm the disease of Unionism. By bringing together representative bodies of masters and men, and appealing to their cooler judgment and better feelings, we may, possibly, stave off a quarrel for a time, and here or there prevent a strike or a lock-out. But, in so doing, we lend the authority of public recognition to the pestilent principle of combination; and sanction the substitution of an artificial mechanism, for that natural organizm which Providence has provided for the harmonious regulation of industrial interests.[27]

[25]For a fuller discussion of these and other automatic wage fixing schemes see the Webbs and an interesting little book by an acute German observer of British labour, Dr. G. von Schulze-Gaevernitz, *Social Peace* (London, 1893).

[26]See the *Report and Proceedings* of the Select Committee on Masters and Operatives (1860), XXII, c. 307, 26.

[27]James Stirling, *Unionism* (Glasgow, 1869), 50.

Indeed, the changed spirit among the working classes was not immediately followed by a like change in spirit on the part of all employers. Not all employers looked upon trade unions as "admirable training schools for the workmen, where they will soon outgrow their heresies on the subject of capital and labour," and where they are "very plainly and forcibly told that the old way of settling disputes with their employers is about the very worst that could be adopted."[28]

A statement of the National Federation of Associated Employers of Labour, established in 1873, probably more accurately expresses the view of a majority of employers, a view of moderate hostility and reserved suspicion:

> They [the unions] have a well-paid and ample staff of leaders, most of them experienced in the conduct of strikes, many of them skillful as organisers, all forming a class apart, a profession with interests distinct from, though not necessarily antagonistic to, those of the work-people they lead, but from their very *raison d'être* hostile to those of the employers and the rest of the community. . . . They have a standing Parliamentary Committee; and active members of Parliament are energetic in their service. They have the attentive ear of the Ministry of the day; and their communications are received with instant and resourceful attention.[29]

Nor was what we are wont to call public opinion any more friendly disposed to trade unions. Journalists, teachers, churchmen never missed an opportunity to point out the folly, if not the wickedness, of trade unionism. Thus, a writer in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* for February, 1867, called every member of a trade union "practically either a slave or a tyrant, or a combination of both, like an Eastern visier." The trade unionist, he went on to say, "resigns his individuality;—he is but a leaf upon a tree or a drop of water in the ocean" (p. 224). Another writer, in the *Quarterly Review* for October, 1867, stated that what the unions have done is "to extract large sums from the working classes to maintain an expensive machinery, to create infinite mischief and ill feeling, in pretending to do that which other causes [high rate of profit and law of supply and demand] were doing for them without their aid" (p. 359).

Much of the opposition to trade unions by pamphleteers and economists was on theoretical grounds, and it is paradoxical that while their *laissez-faire* economics granted the workmen the freedom to organize it considered effective organization or the use of the organiza-

[28]From a letter by an "ironmaster in the north of England" to William Trant, quoted in the latter's *Trade Unions* (London, 1884), 163.

[29]Quoted by the Webbs, 326-7.

tion a violation of its principles. The Combination Acts, which prohibited the organization of workers on grounds of restraint of trade, were repealed in 1824 largely through the efforts of Joseph Hume and Francis Place, protagonists of the free trade doctrines of Adam Smith, Ricardo, and others, and of the individual utilitarianism of Bentham. In a speech delivered at a banquet in honour of Joseph Hume for his role in the repeal of these acts the main speaker of the evening, Francis Jeffrey, declared that the repeal extended "the great principle of *free competition* to the great market of Labour" and relieved the labourer "in the disposal of this, *his only* property, from the irritating, unequal, and degrading restrictions of the Laws against Combination."[30] But these enlightened politicians and philanthropists, conceding, in the name of *laissez-faire,* that workmen had a right to organize, fondly thought that the very grant of this right would prompt the workers not to use it. In a letter written in 1825 Francis Place, the master-mind behind the Select Committee which recommended the repeal of the Combination Acts, wrote: "Combinations will soon cease to exist. Men have been kept together for long periods only by the oppression of the law; these being repealed, combinations will lose the matter which cements them into masses, and they will fall to pieces."[31] And in the very same speech in which he paid tribute to Joseph Hume, Jeffrey expressed concern about the wave of trade union organization and strikes which followed closely upon the heels of repeal (p. 19).

A modern reader finds it difficult to comprehend the sublime faith which intelligent opinion placed in the principles of *laissez-faire* and political economy, as they were interpreted and understood in those days. They were believed in as blindly as one believed in religion or science; and their violation was thought to bring the same dire results as would the violation of the principles of religion or science. Thus, a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* for July, 1854, after pointing out the "profitless and wasteful strifes" that had recently occurred, suggests that in order to eliminate them the workers must learn to "bow, as to the unchangeable ordinances of nature, before those eternal laws of economic science against which all rebellion is childish, futile, and suicidal." It is necessary, he continues, to instil into the "operative classes not only a theoretical conviction, but a living faith, that the laws which govern the distribution both of power and wealth between them and their employers are as fixed and unbending as

[30] *Combination of Workmen* (Edinburgh, 1825); italics in original.
[31] Quoted in Graham Wallas, *The Life of Francis Place (1771-1854)* (New York, 1919), 217.

the laws of nature—like them, plain and discoverable—like them, proving their existence and supremacy by rewards to those who study and obey, and penalties to those who violate or neglect them—like them, inexorably deaf to passion or complaint—like them, mightier than parliamentary authority—like them, more enduring than human theories" (pp. 165, 168).

In a pamphlet already quoted the writer states the doctrine of *laissez-faire* as applied to labour-capital relations with evangelical fervour and dialectical skill:

> God does not leave society to be torn asunder by the capricious violence of contending interests. On the contrary, self-interest is subordinated to the public good; and by the natural antagonism of individual desires the rightful interests of all are harmonised. Things base in themselves are turned to highest uses. The competition of avaricious men is made to check their avarice. The power of the strong becomes a shield to the weak; and the wealth of the rich is made to minister to the needs of the poor: The humble labourer finds his best protection and his richest reward, in that very struggle among the powerful, which shallow thinkers denounce as oppressive to the poor; while, at the same time the competition among labourers for employment secures the capitalist against the tyranny of the many. Free competition ensures justice to all. When nature is left free to work, a divinely regulated mechanism of antagonist interests secures to each man that which is fairly due to him; to the master, faithful service at a fair price; to the labourer, the hire whereof he is worthy.[32]

It is clear therefore that trade unions are a violation of free competition, and are not only ineffectual but evil. The author then concludes with the following prophetic peroration:

> Let the nation, then, insist on justice; let it see that freedom is secured to all; and then, let it leave unionists alone. Let it leave them to the teachings of experience. . . . It will be a painful and a slow process; but in the end it will be successful. Generations may pass away without effect; but, with time, truth will prevail. The fanatical faith of the working-classes in the artificial mechanism of combination, will give place to trust in the wiser, because more natural, system of individual competition; and the hiring of labour, like the exchange of commodities, will be set free, to be regulated by the heaven-ordained laws of Supply and Demand.[33]

It is interesting to note that the writer does not advocate the outlawing of unions. He recognizes that labour must be free to organize because the absence of this freedom would likewise be a violation of the laws of *laissez-faire*.

[32]Stirling, *Unionism*, 6-7.
[33]*Ibid.*, 55.

The economists expressed the deductions to be drawn from the principles of political economy in more learned but no less firm language. Trade unions were ineffective in raising the standard of living for workers. Their lot, said one leading economist, is "confined within narrow barriers which cannot be passed and the problem of their elevation is hopeless. As a body they will not rise at all. A few, more energetic or more fortunate than the rest, will from time to time escape, as they do now, from the ranks of their fellows to the higher walks of industrial life, but the great majority will remain substantially where they are. The remuneration of labour as such, skilled or unskilled, can never rise much above its present level."[34]

Thus with seemingly incontrovertible logic the struggle of labour for improvement in its conditions was doomed to failure by the "eternal laws" of political economy.

These conclusions from the principles of the "dismal science" did not go entirely unchallenged, but they held the field for a long time, and it was an act of courage for a writer in the *Westminster Review* for July, 1860 to treat the venerated myths of political economy with unconcealed sarcasm: "When the subject of strikes is discussed, political economy is seldom employed for any other purpose than conveniently to dispose of the whole question in some such outbursts of outraged science as these:—'How contrary to political economy to seek ten hours' wages for nine hours' work. This cannot be; the immutable laws of demand and supply forbid it.' " (p. 4) Frederic Harrison, Positivist, iconoclast, and friend of labour, was another of those few small voices amidst the blare of the Manchester political economy trumpets who dared to question these laws. He invariably defended the trade unions against the *laissez-faire* doctrinaires and in the following passage flays the dragon of supply and demand with spiteful relish:

> The rate of wages is as much beyond human control as other contracts, and not the least more. So far from the rate of wages "necessarily" falling when prices fall in the same trade, it frequently, and indeed usually, rises whilst prices fall. So far from the rate of profits "necessarily" falling when prices fall, it usually rises whilst prices fall. So far from the rate of wages invariably falling or rising with the "wages-fund," or any other fund, or, indeed, anything at all, it is often in particular occupations, over long courses of years, absolutely fixed, and that in the largest, most highly-paid, and most highly-skilled trades. So far from the fluctuations in the rate of wages being the rule, the rule is rather that it is stationary.

[34] J. E. Cairnes, *Some Leading Principles of Political Economy Newly Expounded* (New York, 1874), 291.

So far from attempts to affect the rate of wages artificially being hopeless, it hardly ever varies in the principal trades from any other cause.[35]

How then did the trade unionists, who accepted the doctrines, attitudes, and philosophy of the middle classes, justify the existence and functions of trade unionism? The answer is that the *laissez-faire* doctrine, like many other doctrines, could with equally good logic be used to support opposing sides. While opponents of trade unions condemned them on the ground that they were a violation of the principles of free trade, the trade union leaders justified them as a necessary part of free trade. The main purpose of trade unions, they argued, is to equalize the bargaining position of labour *vis-à-vis* capital. "It is superfluous to say," one apologist for trade unions wrote, "that the price of labour, like that of anything else, is determined by the quantity or supply of it *permanently* in the market; when the supply of it *permanently* much exceeds its demand, nothing can prevent the reduction of wages; and, conversely, when the demand for it permanently much exceeds its supply, nothing can prevent their rise. In these two extreme points all contention is hopeless." Unions therefore do not "meddle" with these extreme situations but work merely to see that "undue competition" among the employers or employees or the "immediate necessities of their men" should not "unduly" depress wages.[36] Speaking in the language of the Manchester School, the trade unions showed that they existed so that the worker "may have the same chance of selling his labour dearly as the master has of buying it cheaply."[37]

As a further justification of trade unionism the apologists could use an argument which appealed to the venerated notions of the middle class and was congenial to the temper of the age. This was that the trade unions were inculcating the working man with the ideals of thrift and sobriety; that by the institution of an extensive system of benefits the trade unions were helping to carry the burden of the poor rates and thus reducing the tax load upon society as a whole.

The inclusion of benefits among the activities of trade unions did not start with the "new model" unions. Indeed, many of the local trade unions throughout the first half of the century were practically nothing but benefit societies. Small societies, however, could not have a wide range of benefits, and their benefit system was neither efficient,

[35]"The Iron-Masters' Trade Union" in *Fortnightly Review*, Jan., 1865, 97.
[36]Dunning, *Trades' Unions and Strikes*, 5-7; italics in original.
[37]Trant, *Trade Unions*, 43.

systematic, nor predictable. It was not until the establishment of the relatively large and stable amalgamated societies that benefits could become both more elaborate and more systematic.[38]

In time, therefore, the large trade union also became a large insurance company and trade union officials became increasingly concerned with the maintenance of their funds. This concern with benefits was to become in 1889 a powerful argument against the conservative trade union leadership in the hands of socialist unionists such as John Burns and Tom Mann. At this time, however, a widespread system of benefits was considered to be the keystone in the defence arch of trade unionism.

Reluctance to strike was thus given added force by the anxiety with which trade union officials watched their funds. Every strike, no matter how small or how brief its duration, was a drain on the union treasury. Every peaceful settlement, on the other hand, was a saving for the union and therefore to be encouraged.

The growth of an elaborate benefit system had still another effect. To maintain it, it was, of course, necessary to levy a substantial weekly or monthly contribution upon the members. In the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, for instance, the rate of contribution per year rose from £2 5*s*. 8*d*. in 1860 to £3 10*s*. 1½*d*. in 1887. The average contribution per week in the other unions was not much less than a shilling, and sometimes more. When it is realized that average earnings of workers were less than 25 shillings per week, a substantial proportion earning under 20 shillings,[39] it will be readily understood that the large mass of underpaid, unskilled workers could not possibly afford to belong to unions. It is therefore not to be wondered at that the trade unions in this period were limited to the "aristocracy of labour," the skilled workers. Here again we must note some important exceptions. The Agricultural Labourers Union, founded by Joseph Arch in 1874, at one time reached a membership of 100,000, but declined rapidly thereafter and virtually ceased to exist by 1886. Various miners unions, which were practically industrial unions, were now flourishing, now declining in the same period. But the bulk of the trade unions were among the relatively skilled trades.

[38]For further details, including tables on amounts paid out for various benefits, see the official reports of the Labour Correspondent to the Board of Trade, *Statistical Tables and Reports on Trade Unions*, published annually beginning with 1887.

[39]A. L. Bowley, *Wages and Income in the United Kingdom since 1860* (London, 1937), 42.

Furthermore, these skilled mechanics were jealous of their privileged status, their craftsmanship, their standard of living. The policy of excluding from unions their unskilled brothers stemmed from their general policy of restricting the supply of labour in order to maintain wages (a policy deduced from the laws of supply and demand). To allow their organizations to be inundated by a mass of unskilled labour would make it more difficult for them to maintain their own standard of living.

To this general policy may be ascribed that "excessive egotism and greed for self-aggrandisement" of which the secretary of a trade union body complained as early as 1852 in a letter to a newspaper.[40] Thirty-seven years later when another "New Unionism" (not to be confused with the "new model" unions of the fifties and sixties) made its appearance and left its mark upon the philosophy of trade unionism, a friend of labour made the following pointed criticism of the policy of exclusiveness: "The older unions have long been afflicted with the tendency so often remarked in religious sects which, after manfully resisting persecution in bygone times, have grown exclusive, hidebound, retrograde, and the slaves of their own investment. Some years ago (in 1885) I ventured to point out . . . that in two generations Unionism has shown itself powerless to reach the residuum, or to combine the great average mass; that it tended to sectional and class interests; to divide trade from trade, member from non-members; that it accentuates the gulf between the skilled and well-paid artisan and the most destitute residuum."[41]

In justice to the leaders of the T.U.C. it must be said that some of them were quite conscious of this gulf and in the debates at the annual Congress meetings deplored it and advocated friendlier relations. Thus, in its report to the Congress in 1883 the Parliamentary Committee stated: "We would venture to suggest that there is not sufficient missionary work done by the unions. There is need for far more efforts to enlist the adhesion and services of the young men, and far too little attention paid to the influence of wives in union matters."[42] And in 1888 Henry Broadhurst, the secretary of the Parliamentary Committee, concluded his report with the following exhortation: ". . . we appeal to the Unions to show increased activity

[40]Letter from William Peel, secretary of the National Association of United Trades, in the *Star of Freedom*, Sept. 11, 1852.

[41]Frederic Harrison, "The New Trade-Unionism," in *Nineteenth Century*, Nov., 1889, 724.

[42]T.U.C. *Report* (1883), 19.

in the extension of their membership, the strengthening of their organisation, and the widening of the sphere of their operations, ..."[43] But these appeals bore little fruit until the great wave of unionization in 1889 engulfed even the old conservative unions.

This then was the trade unionism of the mid-Victorian era. It no longer smashed machines; it tried to control their effects. It no longer fought the employers with blind violence and hostility; it was "deeply impressed" with the importance of maintaining a "good understanding" between employers and employed. It no longer wanted to change the social order; it desired to make the "workers themselves capitalists."[44]

[43] *T.U.C. Report* (1888), 14.
[44] Opening address by the president of the Tenth Trades Union Congress, *T.U.C. Report* (1877), 11.

THE LETTERS OF POE*

KENNETH MACLEAN

"A man who is writing for *effect* does not write *thus.*" These are not great letters in themselves. They are not, like Cowper's, the intimate record of every day. Not typical of this correspondence is the letter Poe wrote to Mrs. Clemm ("dear Muddy") just after breakfast on April 7, 1844, after a rainy arrival in New York with his young wife (Sis).

> I never sat down to a more plentiful or a nicer breakfast. I wish you could have seen the eggs—and the great dishes of meat. I ate the first hearty breakfast I have eaten since I left our little home. Sis is delighted, and we are both in excellent spirits. She has coughed hardly any and had no night sweat. She is now busy mending my pants which I tore against a nail.

Again, these letters are not greatly important as a larger report on affairs of the second quarter of America's nineteenth century. And certainly these are not letters which, like those of Keats, expound an aesthetic theory. The criticism we meet in these pages is little more than the cynical aside of a busy writer and reviewer. "Nobody is more aware than I am that simplicity is the cant of the day—but take my word for it no one cares any thing about simplicity in their hearts." The life and the times and the theories are of course to be found in a measure in this correspondence, but these letters are in largest measure only the business correspondence of a very busy man. We shall read this correspondence not as literature itself, but rather as it throws light upon a man who elsewhere wrote extremely well.

On the whole the letters encourage a normal view of Poe. If we will make allowance for the general exorbitances of nineteenth-century life, we shall not find Poe too strange a person. His marriage to his young cousin would seem to have given him real happiness, and we can sympathize with the upsets to which her illness and death made him liable. The total impression is not that of a recessive personality. There is little longing for the old Virginia ways as Poe moved increasingly into the busy centres of American life. His fault, if anything (and this he said himself), was that he lived too much in the future. The most persistent subject-matter of these letters is Poe's effort to establish a periodical of his own. While he was not immune to those dreams, which the future has realized, of magazines

**The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, in two volumes. Edited by JOHN WARD OSTROM. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [Toronto: Saunders]. 1948. Pp. xxviii, viii, 664. ($12.50)

of vast circulation with a curt and terse prose, the magazine he wanted to found was to be of the character which its title *Stylus* would suggest. The correspondence tells of repeated defeats in his efforts to get support for this journal, and the reader gets tired and discouraged as disasters follow fast and follow faster. But Poe never. In the last year of his life he finally found a patron in a young heir out in Oquawka (the editor should immediately have indicated the state). With a fifty dollar advance Poe started on a limited forty-niner journey to meet his young sponsor, taking along two lectures to be exchanged for expenses on the way out. The lectures were stolen from his valise in the Philadelphia depot. Poe's break-down at this point was certainly long overdue.

Indeed the general confusion of the last years appears inevitable. Here was a successful writer who could make money lecturing to audiences of 1,800 people. Such lectures were invariably sponsored by America's poetesses, and Poe soon found himself signing his letters "Eddy." "From this day forth I shun the pestilential society of *literary women*." He was simply a normal casualty of the American literary scene. He was not altogether a willing victim. The gift of a fawn he politely declined. "In the meantime accept our best acknowledgments, precisely as if the little fellow were already nibbling the grass before our windows in Philadelphia." Even Poe's philosophical *Eureka* and his extravagantly materialistic conception of the imagination come forth reasonably for the reader who is following the moods and experience of this correspondence. Such things were the necessary expression of Poe's irritation with the transcendentalism of those Boston Frogpondians who felt they had a monopoly on taste and talent. For bringing us to believe in the normal Poe, nothing in these letters is more persuasive than the humour which is their most interesting single literary quality.

It is, however, a hard humour, and perhaps this very hardness is something of a clue to an emotional variation in Poe's person which reflects itself in stories and poems alike. What one may especially notice in Poe as one reads these letters is an intense sense of justice, and this paradoxically would seem to have been in part the making of the delinquent. It was Poe's sense of his own legal rights which made him such a problem to parents, teachers, and employers alike. The University of Virginia had no right to make him sit the same examinations as boys who had been up there a term longer! And indeed as we see the classic pillars of the Rotunda of the University rising around him even while he was an undergraduate there, we are persuaded that Poe was something of an old Greek in his argu-

mentative pursuit of justice. The Greek Revival of his day, whose many facets never failed to stir him, would seem to have meant for him particularly the goddess of justice, the Diké of Hesiod. Poe's legalism was lifelong. He made a persistent effort to recover the $40,000 his grandfather had loaned for the Continental Army. He liked lawyers, and many were his friends. He could see beauty in a judicial brow. Judge Upshur, he said, was "not only the most graceful speaker I ever heard, but one of the most graceful & luminous writers. His head is a model for statuary." As an editor, Poe was continually concerned with those copyright and libel laws, which together could tell the story of his own curious poverty and his disgrace. Inevitably he tried the libel laws himself, coming off with $225 which he very much needed. Justice was the first mark of the gentleman, and Poe never wearied of being one of those nineteenth-century articles. And ever he longed like Hamlet to shake the hand of another honest gentleman.

The letters tempt us to apprehend the law everywhere in his writings, and perhaps we can see this most happily in the justice of his art which insisted upon a completeness that would satisfy both the imagination and the reason. Here Coleridge's aesthetic theory was helpful. Poe who brought cryptograms and criminals out of hiding was not the person to create an uncertain art. He is no dangling participle to be angled for by moderns. The spirit of justice may control somewhat less happily his work as critic. "In criticism I will be bold & sternly, absolutely just, with friend & foe." He longed to kick up a dust and get out the scales, and the mood of justice was never so much upon him as when he thought of the popular reputations of Irving and Longfellow. Justice too often meant for him destructive opportunities. He thought of himself in Johnson's image since they shared, as well as the gloomy struggles of poverty, a critical interest each in his national literature. But we shall never think of "rigid justice" as the motto of Johnson's work as critic, and the want of this emblem, we may suppose, had something to do with saving him from the puerility which would permit Poe to describe a poem as an "illimitable gilded swill-trough overflowing with Dunciad and water."

We cannot but presume to follow justice and the law into the tales ("articles" Poe sometimes called them) until we feel a kind of court-room doom everywhere, with all the perverted eroticism belonging to such chambers. The special chill of the tales is owing to the fact that Poe has identified himself too much with doom and whatever it is that catches up with a man. Here is great suffering

without sufficient sympathy. Here is terror that has not been raised to the tragic. Shakespeare's *Lear* may always be the measure of Poe as writer. Whitman offers a more immediate measurement. From Poe's "Raven" he took night and death and the bird for his "Cradle" and "Lilacs." All Whitman added was his own special knowledge, that birds sing.

The soft underside of Poe's work was necessarily aesthetic rather than emotional. His writings are a parade of beautiful, though injured, objects. Reading the letters we catch glimpses of what would appear to have been a rather wide aesthetic life. We hear of his part in the publishing of a book on sea-shells. We see him introducing himself with a note to an ornithologist in Washington. We find him most evidently interested in book-designing and wood-engravings. The letters further suggest that he was very fastidious about matters of dress, stationery, etc. He reveals that sense for fine living which belongs to the writer but is often the hardest thing for him to come by. Not without obligations to Shelley, Poe was able to sketch the retreats of ideal love, replete with magnolias and tulip-trees. Such was his taste that his friend Marie Louise asked him to help her in the decorating of her music room and library. Poe replied:

> Louise—my brightest—most unselfish of all who ever loved me, I should return the money if I did not know it would grieve you, as I shall have so much pleasure in thinking of you & yours, in that Music Room & Library. Louise—I give you great credit for taste in these things, & I know I can please you in the purchases. During my first call at your house after my Virginia's death, I noticed with so much pleasure the large painting over the Piano which is a masterpiece indeed deserving a place in a palace or church & I noticed the size of all your paintings. The scrolls, instead of set figures—of the drawing room carpet—the soft effect of the window shades also the crimson & gold &c & I was charmed to see the Harp & Piano uncovered. The pictures of Raphael & the Cavelier I shall never forget—their softness & beauty. The Guitar with the blue ribbon, music stand & antique jars. I wondered that a little country maiden like you had developed so classic a taste & atmosphere.

Louise's last call on Poe was made in the company of her parson who apparently had been attacking publicly Poe's arts of "guessing at the truth." The aesthetic circumstance is prominent in Poe's memory of this parting.

> Louise you came in with the parson, in your floating white robe. . . . He stood smiling and bowing at the madman Poe! But that I had invited him to my house, I would have rushed out into God's light and freedom! but I still listened to your voice! I heard you say with a sob 'dear Muddie,' I heard you greet *my Caterina,* but it was only as a

memory of . . . . [*sic*] nothing escaped *my* ear, and I was convinced it was not your generous self that was repeating words so foreign to your nature, to your tender heart!

Some of this light *décor* and drama is out of Sterne and Rousseau; but I should suppose that the detail of living was something that would have come to Poe through his own family—not his wealthy Allan step-parents, but his own poor Poe relatives. Though Mrs. Clemm kept a boarding house and was a drudge who delivered the letters, she is to be suspected of having known what a fine room looked like, and how one behaved therein. Their own living in the Fordham cottage was, I should guess, French pastoral—straw beds, purest white sheets, and the luxury of a tortoise-shell cat.

A definitive edition of Poe's letters at this time was very much in order. Many new letters have been printed, separately and in groups, since Mr. Harrison's collection appeared in 1902. Mr. Ostrom prints 339 letters, thirty or more of which are new or are printed in full for the first time. These volumes appear in a style worthy of the great effort of the editor. The transcript is as exact as type will produce. Each letter is followed immediately by a note clarifying persons, places, and writings involved. Each note (practically) is complete and self-contained. A bibliographical footnote appears for each letter in a separate section. Another separate section is a seventy-five page check-list of letters to and from Poe (830 items in all), revised now since its separate publication in 1941. Mr. Ostrom's annotation is limited to persons and publications. Most modestly, he does not attempt to give his hunches about Poe's literary and intellectual ancestries. The running ballad reference, which would encourage us to put Poe's dissipations, with those of Burns, in the simple "auld lang syne" category, is unnoted. In his handling of persons, the editor has adopted a matter-of-fact way, but there are some lively moments when he is correcting some of Poe's "honesties." Mr. Ostrom continually sends the reader to Arthur Quinn's biography, that other monument in Poe scholarship to appear in this decade.

EUROPEAN IDEOLOGIES* — KARL F. HELLEINER

The number of books and articles which offer to guide bemused North American students through the realm of contemporary European ideas, with its moral and intellectual confusion of tongues, is

**European Ideologies: A Survey of 20th Century Political Ideas.* Edited by FELIKS GROSS, with an Introduction by ROBERT M. MACIVER. New York: Philosophical Library [Toronto: McLeod]. 1948. Pp. xvi, 1075. ($16.00)

legion. The present collection of essays on some of the more influential or vociferous schools of political thought in modern Europe is another attempt to interpret the strange vocabulary and complicated ideological syntax of European political doctrines for the benefit of readers not sufficiently familiar with such "un-American" idioms as Communism, Socialism, Anarchism, Fascism, Nazism, Falangism, and the like.

The kaleidoscope of opinion—if we may vary our metaphors—presented by Professor Gross and his collaborators, while it reveals some fascinating patterns, yet gives rise to a few wistful thoughts. It would almost seem as if recent political philosophy had reached one of those barren stages of development, described by Mrs. Susanne K. Langer, when its "motive concepts" have become exhausted. "An answer once propounded wins a certain number of adherents who subscribe to it despite the fact that other people have shown conclusively how wrong or inadequate it is; since its rival solutions suffer from the same defect, a choice among them really rests on temperamental grounds. They are not intellectual discoveries . . . but doctrines."[1]

Anthologies like the one under review are apt to reveal this sorry state of affairs more clearly than monographs. The frank juxtaposition of conflicting doctrines makes the reader aware of the increasingly academic nature of contemporary political philosophy. "The watchword henceforth is Refutation, its life is argument rather than private thinking."[2] Eclecticism supersedes creative thought.

Of this general tendency the present volume affords at least one perfect example. Mr. George M. Dimitrov, in his article on Agrarianism, gives an exhibition of pedantic eclecticism at its worst. Purporting to expound the social and political creed of East European peasant movements, the writer finds it necessary to elaborate what he calls a philosophy of "bio-materialism."

> In coordinated interaction with the rational faculty and the surrounding milieu, the fundamental biological factor, the instinct, continues to supply the impulse of the movement which is life. And this movement follows the residuary tendencies of the complex interaction of the instinct, the rational faculty and the surrounding milieu. The uniformities to which this movement is subject are not merely those on which the dynamics of inert matter depend. It is consideration of all factors that leads towards the equilibrium and harmony of human existence. The study of human phenomena should therefore be approached not from a purely materialistic point but from a bio-materialistic one capable of establishing their interrelations and their functionally dynamic character. (p. 400)

[1] *Philosophy in a New Key* (Penguin Books, 1948), 6.
[2] *Ibid.*

These half-digested Bergsonian ideas, presented in a cloud of verbosity, are then made to support an edifice of commonplaces advocating private property in land and a "cooperative structure" of society.

Our comments on the prevalence of "academic" features in contemporary political literature should not be construed to imply a preference for violent partisanship and lack of balance. On the contrary: it is the suspicion that, in many cases, that attitude of assumed superiority and hostile omniscience merely serves as a cloak for prejudices and intolerance, which calls forth our main criticism of the present volume. It is directed against the arrogant and quarrelsome tone of some—though by no means all—of the contributions.

The worst offender in this respect is undoubtedly Professor Foerster in his article on Pangermanism. One need not be a person of Austrian descent to take exception to such vituperative utterances as these. "Austria's fate [i.e. her subjugation by Germany] was not unjust; it was due recompense for a blind heedlessness which revealed a deplorable weakness of character and dullness of soul" (p. 749). Surely, Professor Foerster, who likes to think of himself as a protagonist in the fight against nationalism, ought to have been the last person to indulge in collective indictments of this kind. Actually, his essay abounds in wild generalizations and unbalanced judgments such as would have been inexcusable even in the heated atmosphere of war-time. Paraphrasing Clemenceau's alleged complaint that there are twenty million Germans too many in the world, the author writes: "The overwhelming quantity and vitality of the Germans will always act as an impetus towards the enslavement of other nations" (p. 742). Contradicting his own previous emphasis on the universalist and cosmopolitan trends in German history, Professor Foerster maintains that "both Pangermanism and Prussianism were two giant trees deeply rooted in German history" (p. 747). "Hitler was the logical expression of the entire historic trend of the Prussian robber-state; he unmasked the bandits disguised as military knights" (p. 762). The dangers of a recrudescence of nationalism in Germany need not be minimized; but with this German author such fears have become an obsession. He sees the world threatened—in 1948!—by a vast and sinister Pangerman conspiracy. "Through its secret assistants and open propagandists throughout the world, Pangermanism is once again on the political offensive. Let us not deceive ourselves: it is more menacing than ever today, because its plotters have the advantage of knowing and avoiding their past errors." (p. 758)

Considerations of space make it impracticable to list and criticize all the contributions which for one reason or another have struck this reviewer as less than satisfactory. But if the editor of the present

volume cannot be said to have been altogether fortunate in the choice of his collaborators, he must be credited with having assembled at least some very able and interesting essays. Among the latter, Professor Max Nomad's two penetrating articles on Communism and the evolution of Anarchism and Syndicalism should be mentioned first. The writer explodes a myth which—Karl Kautsky's and Lenin's explicit testimonies to the contrary notwithstanding—is still fondly believed in by many naïve left-wing intellectuals: that it was the long-suffering working classes in all countries that gave birth to radical political ideologies. Against this view Professor Nomad points to the fact that the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' party, the parent body of the Bolshevists, was "a 'workers' party' only in a Pickwickian sense, for most of its members were college-bred intellectuals in search of a working class following" (p. 51). The same was true of the anarchist movement in the second half of the nineteenth century. Bakunin's ideas "expressed the aspirations of a stratum then very numerous in all economically and politically backward countries. These were the declassed professionals, intellectuals and semi-intellectuals, the then proverbial lawyers without clients, physicians without patients, newspaper-men without jobs and college students without a future." (p. 330) It is significant that genuine working class movements such as arose among the industrial proletariat in economically more advanced countries have proved, as a rule, remarkably immune to revolutionary propaganda—to the despair of the intellectual doctrinaires and the neurotic fringe. The rift between democratic socialism of a reformist persuasion and revolutionary communism with its legacy of conspiratorial techniques developed rapidly after 1918, and has by now become definitive. This schism, long and loudly deplored by well-intentioned leftists as an unfortunate accident in the history of the international labour movement, will be seen to have been the logical and inevitable result of objective social forces. There is more than a grain of truth in what is, no doubt, a deliberately provocative statement of Professor Nomad's. "The difference between the Communists and the Socialists had become [by 1918] a real class conflict between the more impecunious and hence more adventurous section of the intellectual and white collar workers (with a sprinkling of well-to-do neurotics in search of a new religion) on the one hand, and the more sedate labour politician with a 'proletarian' vocabulary, whose ambition did not go beyond the laurels of a parliamentary career or of a cabinet post within the capitalist system, on the other." (pp. 55-6)

While "marginal" members of the professions and allied groups have indeed frequently proved to be dangerous and disturbing elements in society, the intelligentsia as a whole should not be summarily certified as suffering from social frustration and its *sequelae,* revolutionary *idées fixes.* Karl Marx and Nicolai Lenin were intellectuals, to be sure: but so were John Stuart Mill and John Dewey. Georges Sorel, the French prophet of revolutionary violence, was a member of the educated middle class, no doubt: but so were the Fabian advocates of peaceful social reconstruction. In the past, at any rate, liberalism—using this curiously iridescent term in the broad sense which it has acquired in recent decades—has appealed to some sections of the intelligentsia just as strongly as has the gospel of revolutionary force to others. Of late, however, the persuasive power of political reasonableness seems to be waning. In an atmosphere of insecurity man's willingness to resolve social conflicts by discussion, and to test arguments in the light of empirical evidence is weakening. The ranks of Jules Romains' "Men of Good Will" are thinning. "Liberalism in Crisis" is the theme of Professor Gotesky's contribution to this anthology. The author enumerates and evaluates the forces which, in his opinion, will assure the triumph of totalitarian ideologies and power structures in our time. Written in the guise of dispassionate analysis, this article is really a pathetic cry *de profundis* of a despairing liberal. Though perhaps unduly pessimistic in its conclusions, Professor Gotesky's essay deserves to be studied closely.

One more contribution should be singled out for brief comment. Professor Lednicki's article on Panslavism, a certain lack of organization notwithstanding, makes rewarding reading. One is struck by the thoroughness with which Stalinist Russia has appropriated patterns of thought that were first articulated by Slavophil writers about the middle of the nineteenth century: the deification of the ruler; insistence on Russia's messianic mission; venomous disparagement of Western Europe, that "decrepit dying civilization whose death convulsions we witness" (Nadezhdin, quoted by Lednicki, p. 821); contempt for "formal" democracy, combined with a mystical glorification of the collective, which is "penetrated by one spirit, by one faith, by the same opinions, by similar ideas, and by the same need or desire for common happiness" (Constantine Aksakov, quoted by Lednicki, p. 824)—all these "motive concepts" are only too familiar to the student of contemporary Russian ideology. All in all, Professor Lednicki's penetrating analysis of Panslavist tenets comes as a shocking revelation to the Western reader. For his account discloses un-

suspected depths of political ambition, passion, and hatred in nineteenth-century Russia. In this context some prophetic passages written by a Polish nobleman during the Crimean War bear repeating.

> Gifted with an incomparable sagacity as far as destruction is concerned, [Tsarist Russia] will not let escape a single occasion to turn to [her] profit all the hatreds and envies of our time. . . . She will stretch out her hand to all secret societies, to all conspiracies, to all shadowy plots from one end of Europe to the other. She will pay them with her gold and support them by her critiques—in a word, she will put her whole power at the service of the social revolution . . . [Russia] announces an unknown era; she also proclaims another God, another church, the coming of a new society, religion as the slave of temporal power, the soul subordinate to the body, the destruction of every aristocracy, the obliteration of the individual from the book of life, the realization of absolute equality, it is true, at the cost of the most execrable of tyrannies, but unobtainable in a different manner here below; finally, the idea of property erased from the organization of labour . . . [Russia] is the arisen revolution, organized, disciplined, armed with a million bayonets knocking at the doors of the world! (Count Zygmunt Krasinski, quoted by Lednicki, pp. 882-3.)

Obviously, the ideas and instincts which in our day frighten the freedom-loving nations have had a long period of gestation in the steppes of the east.

To acknowledge the undeniable merits of some of the articles included in this volume does not release the reviewer from his obligation to appraise its general character. Would a European recognize himself or his friends in any or all of the chapters of this survey? Would he recognize the spiritual and intellectual wells from which he has drawn inspiration at one time or another? Would he be able to identify in the pages of this book the essential elements that have entered into the making of his political *Weltanschauung?* One hesitates to answer these questions in the affirmative. It is difficult to state—without writing another book—what is lacking in Professor Gross's anthology. Abbreviating desperately, at the risk of creating serious misunderstandings, one might say that this volume deals, for the most part, with ideologies that are dead or dying. The authors have made no attempt to mirror certain promising, if for the time being abortive, intellectual and spiritual trends which, before the advent of the New Barbarism, were perhaps more influential, if less conspicuous, than senescent Marxism, muddle-headed Anarchism, or the shallow and shop-worn doctrines of Nazism. The reader will search the Index in vain for the name of Ernst Juenger, that dangerously persuasive herald of "heroic realism,"[3] a man whose writ-

[3]See Karl O. Paetel, *Ernst Juenger: Die Wandlung eines deutschen Dichters und Patrioten* (New York, 1946).

ings (like those of another brilliant if erratic German nationalist, Artur Moeller van den Bruck[4]) were infinitely more significant than Hitler's vulgar outpourings, or Rosenberg's pseudo-philosophical gibberish. Nor will the student find a single reference to Ortega y Gasset and his *Revolt of the Masses*. Jacques Maritain and Charles Maurras are mentioned in the text once or twice, but their names are not listed in the Index. Graham Wallas, whose *Human Nature in Politics* has been called "the most original and important contribution to be made to political thought by an Englishman in this century,"[5] would have deserved, but does not get, recognition for his penetrating criticism of the rationalist fallacy in political thinking. It will perhaps be objected that the ideas of these and other original thinkers did not always congeal into doctrines of political "movements." This may be admitted: but we insist that the student who focuses his attention exclusively on the more obvious intellectual currents is bound to miss some of the most essential, if often elusive, motifs that make up the symphony of European ideologies.

In conclusion, a strong protest should be registered against the lack of editorial care so conspicuously exhibited in the pages of this book. Professor Gross's vivid description of how he and his assistants "were almost drowning in galley proofs, page-proofs, index-cards and letters from our contributors" (p. ix) is hardly an excuse for the large number of misprints, garbled sentences, and similar mistakes which disfigure his volume. Foreign names are frequently mis-spelt, for instance Clausewitz (p. 11, text and footnote 1; the correct spelling appears in the Index); Dollfuss (pp. 17, 525, 1069); Rosa Luxemburg (pp. 204, 280, 1072; the Index fails to list a reference to p. 280). There are other blunders too. Professor Gotesky speaks of William (instead of Richard) Cobden (p. 250), and the mistake is repeated in the Index, where the great liberal agitator is thrown together with William Cobbett (mentioned on p. 117), the famous editor of the *Political Register*. But the height of negligence seems to be reached in one of Professor Gross's editorial notes. Surely, an accident such as mis-spelling the name of one of his contributors should not happen to the busiest of editors. Yet this is exactly what Professor Gross has achieved: on p. 485 he refers the reader to "Mr. Napht's article." The correct spelling is Naft. *Sapienti sat.*

[4]Moeller's name does not appear in the Index either; but this omission may be just another piece of that editorial negligence which we shall have occasion to comment on below. For Mr. Stampfer, in his able article on the spiritual roots of Nazism, does devote a page or so (pp. 790-1) to Moeller van den Bruck and his *Germany's Third Empire*.

[5]A. L. Rowse in his foreword to the 1948 edition of Wallas's *Human Nature in Politics* (London, 1948).

IN TARDY RECOGNITION: A HISTORY OF ENGLISH ART*

G. S. VICKERS

The conviction of Englishmen that their art may not be great but that it is their own has hitherto operated to prevent any searching study of it. For generations they have been faced with the dilemma of a cultivated taste for a Gothic ideal largely French and their own romantic feelings for their native medieval art. Foreign scholars have been wondering in print at this combination of modesty and possessiveness for some years: the "Oxford History of English Art" has at last provided the occasion to remedy the defect. The spacious plan of eleven volumes, the nearly official sponsorship of the Oxford Press, and the capable editing of T. S. R. Boase are at least partial guarantees of a success which is to be measured, as the editor sensibly concludes, if the series "leaves the subject in a more consistent form, better related to our history as a whole, the ground better prepared for the researches of the future."

English Art, 1307-1461 is the fifth volume in the "History," but the first to appear. As the dates of the title suggest, the divisions chosen are of periods of general history; and it is into this framework of political and social development that the art of architecture, sculpture, and painting and all the allied crafts are fitted in Miss Evans's book. The author has had considerable experience in this type of comprehensive work, and it is as well, for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, particularly the fourteenth, provide in all European art save that of Italy a mass of data still but partly documented and poorly understood. There may be other periods equally obscure in the history of English art, but none are as encumbered with monuments as the fourteenth century.

Miss Evans has adopted a threefold structure to guide her through her task—the time-honoured categories of English Gothic architecture, hence chapters on the Decorated style and the Perpendicular style; the great historical events and movements, Art after the Black Death, the Towns and Villages; and finally, and only occasionally, the reigns of kings who as personalities impressed their mark on English life and English art. Of the three systems, the first was originally limited to architecture and Miss Evans has made only fitful application of its definitions to the other arts, as when she labels the manuscripts of the first quarter of the fourteenth century Decorative. The second is

**English Art, 1307-1461.* By JOAN EVANS. The Oxford History of English Art, edited by T. S. R. BOASE. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press [Toronto: Oxford]. 1949. Pp. xxiv, 272, 96 plates. ($7.50)

Religious Art from the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century. By EMILE MALE. New York: Pantheon. 1949. Pp. 208, 48 plates. ($4.50)

apparently the more congenial to her and serves admirably to contain and organize the sections on Chantries and Colleges and that on Towns and Villages. The third system, that by the reigns of monarchs, is the most provocative and the most dangerous. Even if it were a partial truth only, the evidence of the influence of a king and his court would argue a centralizing and controlling role for Westminster much greater than that of any other contemporary royal court of Europe. It may be that Miss Evans has been led to this position by the recent writings of Maurice Hastings on St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster and J. H. Harvey's rather enthusiastic claims for the Plantagenet kings as patrons of art.

It is in pursuance of this last method that she attempts to define the prevailing temper of each change as a reflection of the mood of the monarch and the conduct of his government and court. So the sombre majesty of the late years of Edward I is succeeded by the frivolous lightness of the court of Edward II and it by the chivalric brilliance of the first half of Edward III's reign. The method is not pushed to a travesty of history, however, and the excesses of J. H. Harvey's recent volumes on the same period have been wisely avoided.

Restricted by the bonds of conventional classification for architecture, the author can make little use of her new classifications in that field; but in the sumptuary arts, in sculpture slightly, and above all in painting she has opened a way to understanding of the grotesques of early fourteenth-century manuscript painting, the delicate sentimentality of the art of the court of Richard II, the lavish creations of the reign of Edward III.

Yet even in this last instance a fundamental limitation of the whole book is all too apparent. A history of English art except for rare moments cannot be written out of the context of European art history for two sufficient reasons. In the last quarter of the fourteenth century the importance of French models for the nave of York cathedral, for the Wilton diptych, for the Missal of the London Carmelites is too great to be ignored. Furthermore the peculiar qualities of English art can only be grasped clearly by comparison with contemporary art on the Continent and particularly in France. One would hesitate to estimate Chaucer as a poet without reference to the numerous Continental sources he employed and the characteristic change he made in them. In the light of Miss Evans's numerous publications on French medieval art one can only conclude that this was a self-imposed limitation not based on indifference but on a wish to conserve space, which the airing of the several important questions of Continental-English relations would have demanded. It is a loss to

the history of English art, however; and one feels that a good deal of material put in for impressionistic effect might have been sacrificed to these more basic matters.

The second serious defect of the text arises from the social and political framework of English history: the objects of art are too often seen simply as corroborative evidence. Miss Evans is by no means as guilty in this respect as the English writer of a few years ago whose book on the English chantries was so one-sidedly a study of an institution that one wonders why he bothered to illustrate it copiously with photographs. Yet so interesting is the political significance of the six kings upon the choir screen of Canterbury cathedral that she is content to dismiss them artistically as "of a higher standard of accomplishment than any portrait sculpture hitherto achieved in England" when they represent one of the few monuments of sculpture of the period in anything like original condition. Closely allied to this failing is the custom, doubtless based on the practice of the historians of English architecture and sculpture, of dismembering an artistic complex for material pertinent to a special theme and never giving a description of the artistic whole in any one place. It is necessary to search under Heraldry, Effigy, Canopy, and Chantry to complete one's knowledge of a number of the great tombs. The method is not only confusing, however; it can be productive of such strange omissions as that of the effigy of Edward III which receives mention only in a footnote and is there referred to merely as evidence for the facial characteristics of the monarch.

The plates, which have been chosen with unusual care, almost justify the book in themselves. There is a weakness not as obvious to an Englishman as it is to one less acquainted with the country's monuments: it is a tendency to illustrate a part rather than the whole of a monument, relying as the author tells us on the well-known texts. Unfortunately these very texts have such poor illustrations that one can only wish that Miss Evans's superb plates could supersede them.

If the attempt at synthesis of the material has not been altogether successful, there are portions of the book which slide smoothly along subordinating with deftness a host of facts to the flow of the argument. The chapter on Chantries and Colleges will serve as an instance of Miss Evans at her best. Throughout the text are introduced opinions and evidences which are original contributions to our knowledge of the field and these give added interest to the work. The theory that the Eleanor Crosses mark the inception of the Decorated style may be questionable in the absence of comparable material created by the Westminster Abbey school of artists who had been at work in England

since about 1245; but emphasis upon these important monuments may draw attention to a critical phase of English art history. The suggestion that the Percy Tomb is the largest and finest Easter sepulchre in England is a reasonable explanation of its position and the absence of effigies. The identification of St. Edward the Confessor and St. Edmund with Edward III and the Black Prince adds further to our knowledge of the iconography of the Wilton diptych though it hardly strengthens the case for an English origin. The diptych in the Museo Nazionale, Florence representing the Crucifixion and the Epiphany does not exactly meet the description of one belonging to Abbot Litlyngton of Westminster Abbey, but it is true that the work possesses a strange quality of agitation unmatched in contemporary French painting though quite similar to an intensity of gesture to be seen in English sculpture a generation earlier. Miss Evans also effectively disproves the notion that the Black Death was catastrophic in its results for art. In architecture at least there are no serious interruptions, new enterprises are undertaken, and there is no diminution of scale or quality of workmanship. The evidence for sculpture and painting is hardly marshalled so that one can make a similar judgment for these allied arts.

There is at least mention of virtually all the important monuments, the most serious omission being that of the Jesse sculpture upon the screen at Christchurch (Northhants). The book contains an appendix of minor monuments not discussed in the text, and a lengthy selective bibliography prefaced with some paragraphs on the most useful books of reference. The text is carefully footnoted and the reader is directed to the best source of further information or confirmation. This volume is a most promising beginning to an important university press series.

That context of European art history which we found missing in *English Art* has long been represented for students in the four great studies of Emile Mâle on the subject-matter of medieval and Counter-Reformation religious art. These are no longer the indispensable sources of most of our knowledge of these fields but they are still the most comprehensive and the most entertaining treatments of the themes we possess. The author has now issued, first in French and then in an English translation, a condensation for an audience wider than that which can obtain the costly, and in one case rare, original volumes.

Fom the four texts he has excerpted important sections, joining them together with introductory paragraphs of new invention. Strangely, he has taken least from the best of his volumes, that on the

thirteenth century, and most from that dealing with religious art at the end of the Middle Ages. Except in one or two cases, as when he mentions a monument discussed in the original but omitted from the shortened version (p. 56), or describes a part only of a connected series of images, the Labours of the Months, this drastic method is remarkably successful. There is conveyed the same impression of authority and completeness in the reduced account as in the original.

It is a pity that the publishers did not enlist the services of a competent historian of art to read the English translation, for there are numerous little errors which are not in Mâle's texts. As instances, the twenty-four elders of the Apocalypse become the eighty-four elders, the famous English psalter at Hildesheim should be "from" St. Albans, not "at" St. Albans. Otherwise the translation is more than competent and balks only at a few geographical and technical terms, rendering them in French though, for instance, the equivalent to "pignons" in English is "gables."

The text is supplemented by forty-eight well-chosen illustrations, somewhat disfigured by their method of placing, bled as the plates are to the margins of the page. Their titles are in some instances most unattractively placed as a result of this practice.

While this is no substitute for the books upon which it is based, *Religious Art* has its uses. It would be ideal preliminary reading to a summer to be spent in Europe and an effective accompaniment to undergraduate survey courses in European art. Its most serious failing is its inescapable completeness: it does not arouse curiosity or if it does provides no outlet for it.

SHORTER NOTICES

The Testament of Werther: In Poetry and Drama. By STUART PRATT ATKINS. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [Toronto: Saunders]. 1949. Pp. xiv, 322. ($5.50)

In the series of "Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature" Mr. Atkins, Professor of German at Harvard, has brought out a very interesting volume on the literary reception of Goethe's *Werther* in the poetry and drama of Bohemia, China, Denmark, Germany, France, Holland, Italy, Poland, Rumania, Russia, Spain, and Sweden. A bibliography of more than 80 pages with items reflecting different phases of Wertherian influence bears witness to the challenging strength of Goethe's first novel, in the wake of which three main literary currents are discernible at almost all times: imitation, criticism

(on moral grounds), and parody. The latter alone contained any promise or possibility of becoming vital literature. Since this possibility remained unrealized Mr. Atkins shows good judgment in discussing imitation, criticism, and parody under the one guiding theme of testament.

It was Herder who envisaged a kind of literary history and criticism that would not be satisfied with commenting on a book as so many pages between two book covers, but would complete its characterization by describing its effects on other writers and even more on the reading public. Professor Atkins has done ample justice to the strictly literary influences that emanated from *Werther*. What the novel and its offshoots meant to generations of readers, the larger aspects of the Werther cult, we have to glean from his work by implication. Obvious as it is that the destiny of *Werther* was shaped by social conditions (mainly by the eagerness of the awakening middle classes to lay hold on and to identify themselves with the emotional riches Goethe had there ascribed to two of their members, to Werther and Lotte), this social basis of the popularity of *Werther* deserves fuller treatment. We know of no one in as good a position to give it as is Mr. Atkins.

H. Boeschenstein

Unity and Difference in American Life: A Series of Addresses and Discussions. Edited by R. M. MacIver. Religion and Civilization Series. New York and London: Harper, for the Institute for Religious & Social Studies [Toronto: Musson]. 1947. Pp. viii, 168. ($3.50)

The chief impression left by this slim volume of addresses and discussions is one of disappointment. Ambitious, and sometimes misleading, titles raise the reader's hopes high only to have the essays which follow dash them down too often. That is not to say that all the papers are of the same value; as in most collections they vary much in worth and interest.

The volume is divided into three parts: "The Common Ground"; "The Dividing Issues"; "What We Can Do about Them." In the three papers of Part I, Louis Finkelstein stresses the need of gaining a sense of human unity in the nation and throughout the world on the basis of long-range planning and of the recognition of the prime value of the spiritual life of man; Allan Nevins analyses the rise of American culture and finds individualism, modified recently by a desire for social justice, along with enterprise, belief in equality of opportunity, devotion to personal freedom in civil and religious

rights, and optimism to be its chief marks; Louis Frank leaves one baffled as to what common ground America has won. In Part II, E. Franklin Frazier, in the most distinguished paper of the collection, ably presents the negro problem as it now exists; Vilhjalmur Stefansson touches upon the condition of the Eskimos, contrasting unfavourably Canadian and American treatment with that given by Soviet Russia; Eli Ginzberg finds that "economics is a way of thinking about how people make a living," and therefore involves one in a discussion of morals, education, and social philosophy; Ralph W. Sockman emphasizes deep conviction and wide vision in religion, and concludes with the late Archbishop Temple that, "This world can be saved from political chaos by one thing only, and that is worship." In Part III, the most disappointing, Clyde R. Miller, in the most positive paper of this part, warns against the delusions of racial and class superiority, of exclusive possession of the truth by any one group, of scarcity of goods and jobs, and ends by discussing a plan, based on the well-known Springfield Plan, by which men "can be set free within a few weeks" from these delusions; Gerald W. Johnson feels that the press can do most by fulfilling its duty of acquainting its readers with all the facts and shades of opinion; Edward L. Bernays states that the most effective, logical, and simple way of dealing with such divisive forces as the negro-white relationship is to have ten or twenty of the leading investment bankers and the heads of the largest corporations exert their power and examples: thus will be solved "The American Dilemma." Walton Hale Hamilton in discussing "What Can the Courts Do?" merely points out that the United States Supreme Court so juggled with one aspect of the negro problem as to arrest justice for years, and to come "very close to betraying a basic human right"; R. M. MacIver closes the volume with a statement on "What We All Can Do," which stresses the primary importance of the attitudes with which we approach all problems of unity and disunity.

This group of essays is in itself an example of variety if not of disunity. How far, for instance, is it from Dr. Finkelstein's spirituality and Dr. Sockman's worship to Dr. Miller's faith in conditioning? A number of the papers are obviously dated since they were apparently given before the end of the war. Despite these facts and the rather negative views of several of the authors it will be worth while for Canadians to pay some serious attention to this collection of essays if only to observe earnest-minded men struggling with the problem of unity and difference in national life which, given all differences of

detail, is in essence one of the most important issues, if not the basic problem of Canadian existence.

RICHARD M. SAUNDERS

Male and Female: A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World. By MARGARET MEAD. New York: Morrow [Toronto: Collins]. 1949. Pp. xii, 477. ($5.50)

This book, it is presumed, will be read by two sorts of people, the specialists who know Dr. Margaret Mead's skill as an observer and interpreter of anthropological data, and the lay readers who may wish for any fresh light that the scientific commentator has to throw upon the relations between men and women in contemporary Western society. For, although Parts II and III of the work, with Appendix I, are occupied with a careful description of biological and social facts as observed among seven South Pacific groups, the author states plainly in Part I that her purpose in setting forth these South Sea cultures in detail is to make us, the men and women of the American continent, look at ourselves with fresh understanding. Illumination will come, presumably, from the argument outlined in Part IV, which is entitled "The Two Sexes in Modern America." Whether converted to the naturalism of this argument or not, the reader will learn from the book. He will also note the sensitive awareness revealed in Appendix II and be interested by the autobiographical fragment in Appendix III. The volume is furnished with a full bibliography and excellent indexes.

Following his intent and experienced guide through Parts II and III of *Male and Female,* the reader is given revealing vignettes and explanations of customs and incidents in the life of the Samoans, the Lake-dwelling Tchambuli and others. The views he is given all point to one conclusion, the immense variation that obtains in human custom and attitude as regards sex and reproduction. The inference is that a possible change or changes in the American attitudes and customs of today with regard to sex and reproduction will inevitably increase the satisfaction and well-being of numerous individuals like ourselves. So when in Part IV concrete matters such as the contemporary uncertainty of youth, the boredom of middle age, the increase in women's professional activity and in divorce are discussed, the reader is invited to discard conventional notions and to think afresh.

It is here that the book may prove less satisfactory to some than to others. The anthropologist is helpful in reminding us of our origins and of the physical self and its needs. He or she criticizes with justice unreal attitudes with regard to the basic physical characteristics of man. Society should be made strongly aware of any split between social convention and individual practice. However, where the striking feature of current practice is unawareness of the standards of civilization, and where contemporary education tends to leave out any inculcation of restraint and other-regarding values, it would appear dangerous to concentrate upon origins without defining ends. Physical and emotional satisfactions are good, but humane good is a more complex thing than a sum of satisfactions. The implication that the one basic good is material and that other values are extrinsic and secondary fails to convince. Thus, while the wholeness in human life which Dr. Mead so strongly and so rightly desiderates will be better understood by those who read her book, human wholeness would seem far from men's grasp as long as their view of good remains naturalistic.

M. M. KIRKWOOD

Ritual Magic. By E. M. BUTLER. Cambridge: at the University Press [Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada]. 1949. Pp. x, 329. ($4.25)

Within the last fifty years the careful studies of field anthropologists in many parts of the world have described for the first time the place of magic in the lives of diverse peoples. Sometimes akin to science, sometimes to religion, magical practices, having the common element of the control of powers or beings, play a prominent part in the lives of most of the so-called primitive peoples of today or yesterday. In Europe, however, the "accidents of history" drove much of magic into concealment; it became a black art, associated with demons and devils, condemned by the church, and regarded with horror by the righteous. To what extent this condemnation, with the circulation of distorted tales, and the appeal of the prohibited, may have aided the continuance of magical practice is, perhaps, a problem for the psychologist. Suffice to say that, in spite of the hostility of church and state, various types of magic have been practised for centuries in Europe.

Professor Butler's theme is a fascinating one, namely, the tracing of magical ceremonies to control spirits from Akkad to the twentieth century. From the earlier sources there developed a series of rituals

loosely associated with Solomon, as the master magician. These included extremely complex ceremonies in which symbolism, drama, and verbal incantations were combined. From this source came the inspiration of books of magic that were circulated secretly in Europe. Professor Butler follows her theme with the scholarly approach of the historian combined with what can only be called the determination and ingenuity of a detective. Now quoting from a fourteenth-century book of magical rituals (the proud but illegal possession of some optimistic seeker after power), then from the confession (before or after torture) of some alleged practitioner, she traces a change from the concept of unilateral control over unwilling spirits, through the Faustian concept of a mutual pact, to the gradual decline of ritual magic in the last century. The devotees of magic are a strange crew, ranging from avaricious adventurers, peasant simpletons, renegade monks, to Gilles de Rais, the gallant associate of Joan of Arc, to Madame de Montespan, the favourite of Louis XIV, and to those who looked up to "Faust." Ironically, today they are best known through the imaginative genius of Shakespeare and Milton.

Ritual Magic is not a book to be picked up for light reading. Miss Butler writes clearly and with assurance on a broad subject; her presentation is scholarly to a degree, but she pays her readers the compliment of assuming considerable knowledge of history, philosophy, and magic, and the ability to follow an intricate argument.

T. F. McIlwraith

BOOKS RECEIVED

Beginning with this issue a list of Books Received will appear in October, January, and July. A book which is mentioned in this list may be reviewed later. We begin here with books published in 1949 now on our shelves, as far as space permits. Books received for "Letters in Canada" are not included.

Ames, Russell. *Citizen Thomas More and His Utopia.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press [Toronto: Saunders]. 1949. Pp. viii, 230. $4.50.

Barth, Karl. *Dogmatics in Outline.* Translated by G. T. Thomson. New York: Philosophical Library [Toronto: Ryerson]. 1949. Pp. 155. $2.75.

Brown, Ivor. *Shakespeare.* London and Toronto: Collins. 1949. Pp. 237. $3.50.

Coghill, Nevill. *Visions from Piers Plowman Taken from the Poem of William Langland and Translated into Modern English.* London: Phoenix House [Toronto: Dent]. 1949. Pp. 143. $3.00.

CRASHAW, RICHARD. *The Verse in English of Richard Crashaw.* New York: Grove Press. 1949. Pp. 255. $1.25, paper.

EBY, EDWIN HAROLD. *A Concordance of Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass and Selected Prose Writings.* Fascicle I. Seattle: University of Washington Press. 1949. Pp. xvi, 256. $4.00, paper.

FORSTER, LEONARD. *German Poetry, 1944-1948.* Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes. 1949. Pp. 72. 6*s.*

FOSTER, JAMES R. *History of the Pre-Romantic Novel in England.* New York: Modern Language Association of America; London: Oxford. 1949. Pp. xii, 294. $4.50.

GIDE, ANDRE. *Notes on Chopin.* Translated from the French by BERNARD FRECHTMAN. New York: Philosophical Library [Toronto: McLeod]. 1949. Pp. 126. $5.00.

HARTT, FREDERICK. *Florentine Art under Fire.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press [Toronto: Saunders]. 1949. Pp. x, 148. $6.25.

HURST, Sir ARTHUR. *A Twentieth Century Physician: Being the Reminiscences of Sir Arthur Hurst, D.M., F.R.C.P.* With a Foreword by Professor JOHN A. RYLE, M.D., F.R.C.P. London: Edward Arnold [Toronto: Longmans, Green]. 1949. Pp. viii, 200. $3.50.

JAMES, D. G. *The Life of Reason: Hobbes, Locke, Bolingbroke.* London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green. 1949. Pp. xiv, 272. $5.00.

JASPERS, KARL. *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy.* Translated by RALPH MANHEIM. New York: Philosophical Library [Toronto: McLeod]. 1949. Pp. iv, 188. $4.00.

JONES, ERNEST. *Hamlet and Oedipus.* London: Gollancz [Toronto: Longmans, Green]. 1949. Pp. 166. $3.00.

LAMONT, CORLISS. *Humanism as a Philosophy.* New York: Philosophical Library [Toronto: McLeod]. 1949. Pp. 369. $5.00.

LOVELL, ERNEST J., JR. *Byron: The Record of a Quest: Studies in a Poet's Concept and Treatment of Nature.* Austin: University of Texas Press. 1949. Pp. x, 270. $3.00.

MCKENZIE, GORDON. *Critical Responsiveness: A Study of the Psychological Current in Later Eighteenth-Century Criticism.* University of California Publications in English, Volume 20. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1949. Pp. viii, 311. $4.00, cloth; $3.00, paper.

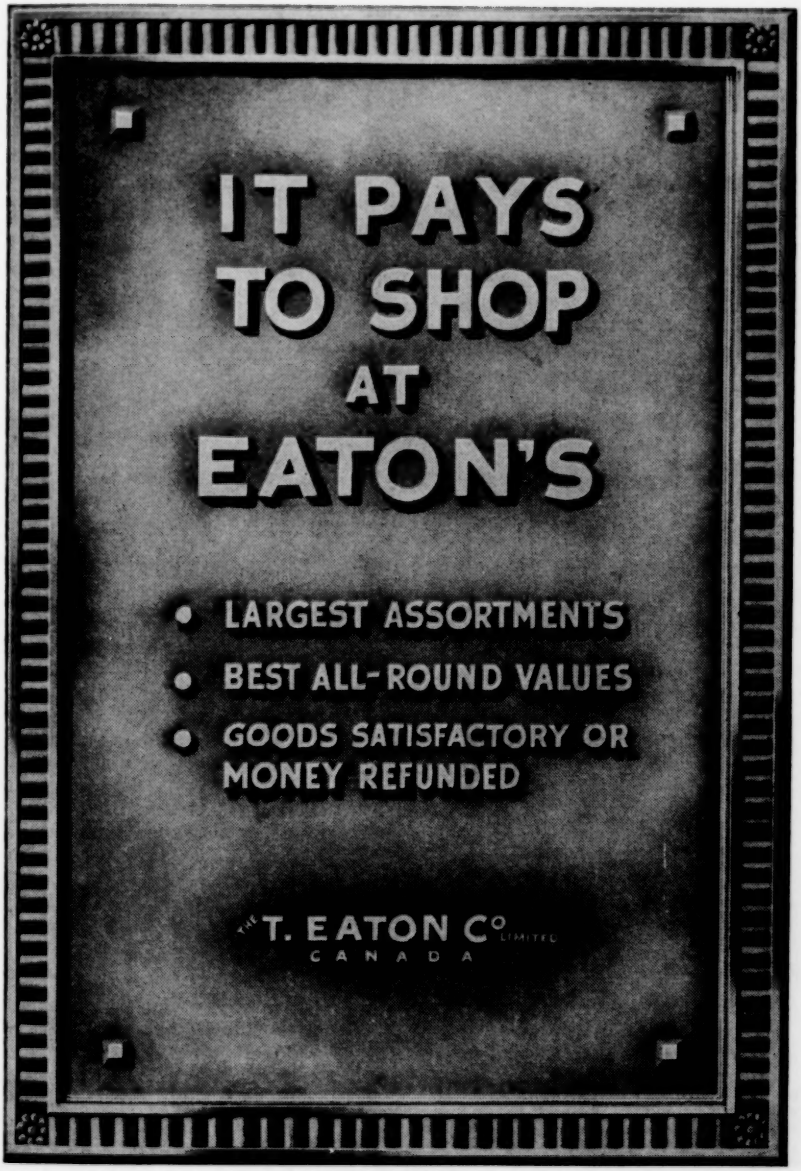
MELVILLE, HERMAN. *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade.* New York: Grove Press. 1949. Pp. 294. $1.25, paper.

MUNSTERBERG, HUGO. *A Short History of Chinese Art.* New York: Philosophical Library; East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State College Press [Toronto: McLeod]. 1949. Pp. xiv, 227. $6.75.

MURDOCK, KENNETH B. *Literature & Theology in Colonial New England.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [Toronto: Saunders]. 1949. Pp. xvi, 235. $5.00.

SCHWEITZER, ALBERT. *Goethe.* London: Adam & Charles Black [Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada]. 1949. Pp. x, 84. $1.65.

Shakespeare Survey: An Annual Survey of Shakespearian Study & Production. Edited by ALLARDYCE NICOLL. Nos. 2, 3. Cambridge: at the University Press [Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada]. 1949, 1950. Pp. viii, 164; viii, 167. $3.50; $2.75.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